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Charlie Clemson on Sunday Morning. Page 6.

FIRST THE BLADE

BY

HANNAH MORE JOHNSON

AUTHOR OF "SNOW-DRIFTS," "SIGNAL-LIGHTS," ETC.

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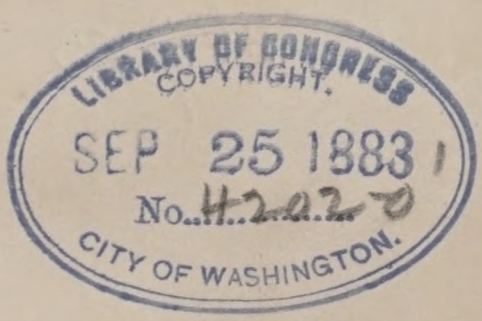

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

THE CLEMSONS..... 5

CHAPTER II.

MR. STEADMAN'S STORY..... 24

CHAPTER III.

THE RONY PHAETON..... 36

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROMISED EXCURSION..... 47

CHAPTER V.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT..... 61

CHAPTER VI.

LOOKING TO JESUS..... 75

CHAPTER VII.

CLOUDS IN THE SKY..... 84

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WOUNDED LIEUTENANT..... 95

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

LITTLE WILLIE DENTON 113

CHAPTER X.

AN EFFORT TO DO GOOD 131

CHAPTER XI.

MR. DENTON'S PARTY 152

CHAPTER XII.

FRESH EXPERIENCES 165

CHAPTER XIII.

ABOUT GRANDFATHER CLEMSON 177

CHAPTER XIV.

MARY'S DIFFICULTIES 189

CHAPTER XV.

FAREWELLS 205

CHAPTER XVI.

HOME AGAIN 215

CHAPTER XVII.

TRYING DAYS 228

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOOD OUT OF EVIL 245

CHAPTER XIX.

FRUIT AFTER MANY DAYS 258

FIRST THE BLADE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CLEMSONS.

"Oh, home, by love made sacred,
Well known in heaven thou art,
Encamping-ground of angels,
Dear to the Saviour's heart."

"IT'S 'most time for Sunday-school, Mary. We must go early to-day, you know."

Charlie, leaning from his perch on a crooked limb of the old apple tree, could look down on his sister's brown curls as she sat in the window of her little room bending over an interesting book.

"Mary, I say, wake up! It is ten minutes of three by the town-clock. I can see it from here."

Charlie's last remark brought Mary back to Mapleton from her dreamy wanderings in a world of fancy.

"See the town-clock! How can that be?" she exclaimed, starting up to look in the direction of the church-spire rising somewhere behind the leafy orchard trees which completely hid it from her view, and then up and around for the voice.

"Come up here, and I'll show you," said Charlie, tossing a green apple into her window by way of calling attention to the place where he sat with dangling feet.

"Charlie Clemson! What do you mean? Climbing apple trees on Sunday! Your best clothes on too!"

"I'm reading," said Charlie, complacently, unfolding his little Sunday-school paper. "Don't you wish you were up here?"

"No, indeed! You had better come down yourself, and right quick too."

"I will, when I get ready."

"Dr. Anson is coming down the road," said Mary, in a lower tone, spying the form of her venerable pastor through a gap in the shrubbery. "Perhaps you had better stay where you are till he gets by," she added as the old gentleman drew nearer.

Straightforward Charlie had no such idea.

"Dr. Anson coming!" he exclaimed. "I mean to walk up to the church with him;" and the impulsive boy began without more ado to work himself along the limb upon which he was sitting, and so down to the ground, where he stood brushing off his clothes when the good man came opposite the little gate.

"Well, my boy," said Dr. Anson, cheerily, "you are ready betimes, I see. Shall we walk along together? Mr. Brown will need your help in seating the platform. These anniversaries bring work as well as pleasure."

Charlie blushed as he met the kind gaze of his old pastor, and then, a little conscience-stricken, looked down on a great rent he had just discovered in the sleeve of his new coat.

"I'll come pretty soon," he stammered. "But, but— The fact is, here's something's got to be mended."

"Nothing unusual in that," said the doctor, with a smile and taking in the situation at a glance. "We all have considerable mending to do; and Sunday is a good time

to mend some things—our ways, for instance."

How Charlie wished he had not climbed that tree, especially when, as the doctor passed on, his mother came to the door and looked sober when she saw what had happened.

"See what Charlie has done to his new coat, mother. He is so careless!"

"I wouldn't have gone up the tree, only it was so hot down here. I am real sorry, mother," said the manly little fellow, holding up the torn sleeve with a very rueful face.

"So am I, but that will not mend the coat. I wish my boy would learn to think before he acts."

"I do try every day, mother."

"I believe you do, Charlie," she said, looking into the troubled face upturned to hers. "Perhaps some day you will really learn. Just now we must get out the old coat and put it on, or you will be late at the church."

"But the old coat is faded and short in the sleeves, mother," said Mary, who, though willing to have Charlie reproved as he de-

served to be, was not ready to see him go to church shabbily dressed. "Hadn't he better stay at home than wear that coat again?"

"Stay at home on anniversary day?" exclaimed Charlie, indignantly. "No, indeed! But can't that coat be mended? It only needs a stitch to hold that corner down for to-day. Just for to-day. I'll promise you that I'll never, never climb a tree on Sunday or any other day."

"Do not make rash promises, Charlie. You may have to climb a tree some time, and perhaps on Sunday. As for the coat, you will have to take it off."

That was to Charlie less of a trouble than it would have been if Catherine, his mother's maid-of-all-work, had not just then appeared around the corner of the house, on her way to the church, with two immense bouquets for the platform.

"Hold on a minute, Catherine," exclaimed Charlie, dashing up stairs after the old coat; "I'm going to carry those."

"Not so fast, Master Charlie; there's more posies forbye these. Look on the kitchen-

bench, will ye? Ferns and lilies and ladies' eardrops and roses, and whatever else my leddy could find i' the garden she has pulled for the kirk. She thinks there's naething too gude for that, bless her!"

Charlie was out of hearing, and Catherine did not wait.

But Fido did. His wagging tail and beseeching eyes very plainly told that he knew something unusual was going on among the children, and he was speaking for his share of the pleasure.

"Fido forgets that he always stays at home on Sunday," said Mary, patting his little black head. "I wonder how he remembers the day, mother? He has never asked to go to church before since he was our dog."

"Only once before," said Mrs. Clemson, sadly.

"When was that, mother? I've forgotten."

"Five long years ago this month. These white roses were in bloom then, just as they are to-day;" and Mrs. Clemson took a bud from the spray hanging within her reach.

"Ah, yes! That was the day of dear father's funeral."

Mary could remember how, on just such a summer Sunday afternoon as this, he had been carried forth from his home to the old church, and then out to rest under the trees behind it, little Fido following close beside them as a humble mourner in the sad procession.

Mary was eight years old then, and Charlie but five. Neither of the children remembered much of their father's years of health. Only one picture was vividly painted on Mary's memory: that was of the day when, in the strength of his young manhood, he stood up in Mapleton church to confess his faith in Christ. A few months afterward came the illness from which he never recovered.

Besides the pleasant home he had just purchased, with its orchard and garden, he left but little for the support of his family; and Mrs. Clemson had been obliged to use both her pen and her needle in order to eke out the slender income.

How slender that was Mary was just be-

ginning to understand. She had never objected to made-over dresses and bonnets until that summer when her young friend Emily Grant came back from a winter in the city with so much finery that both their heads were quite turned. Mr. Grant had built a handsome villa on the other side of Mrs. Clemson's orchard, and, with its widespread lawn and elegant conservatories, it quite overshadowed her own modest home, whose shrubbery and flowers had before that been without a peer in that quarter of Mapleton.

The difference between Emily's lot and her own was that afternoon the cause of some repining thoughts on Mary's part. As she stood in the porch waiting for her mother and looking out over the long sunny path that stretched between the door-yard maples and the village centre, she saw her friend drive by with two gay girls in her pretty phæton on their way to the church. The walk there, by either the river-path or the public road, was generally pleasant, but Mary could not feel cheerful over the prospect that afternoon, especially after having had a sight of Emily.

"Mother," she said as that lady made her appearance down stairs all ready for church, "whichever way we go we shall have a dreadfully warm walk. An hour later and the river-path will be shady. I wish we could ride or that Dr. Anson had not named such an early hour."

"So do I," said Mrs. Clemson. "But, since we cannot do as we would, let us cheerfully do what we must. Are you all ready?" giving a motherly survey as she took up her sun-umbrella to go. "Not quite, I see," in almost the same breath. "Your sash-ribbon is wrong-side out, and you had better leave this faded rosebud at home, when two or three more are smiling at you as if to say, 'Come and take us.' Let me pin one on for you, with a green leaf or two to make it feel at home. Then, if the wind should rise, your hat is all ready to tip over for want of fastening."

"Oh dear!" sighed Mary as she passively yielded to the kind hands that were putting her dress in order; "I cannot see what makes you expect a breeze, mother. There isn't a breath of air anywhere. We shall be

as wilted as that rosebud before we get to church."

"You are not looking the right way, Mary. There has been a glorious cloud lying over Brompton meadows since noon, and in the last half hour it has rolled up high enough to tell us that the wind is astir over there and may bring us a shower before night."

"I am glad about one thing," said Mary, caressing the hand she held as though some comfortable thoughts were, after all, possible in so uncomfortable a day: "I am glad to have you all to myself. Sometimes it seems to me we don't have half so many nice talks as we had last winter. There's so much to do in our house, or else, when I want to tell you things, somebody's by to listen."

Mrs. Clemson smiled:

"We were just as busy last winter, dear. Isn't the trouble with yourself?"

"Perhaps it is—sometimes. Do you remember how you felt when you were a little girl?" Mary asked, earnestly, of her mother.

"I think I do," was the prompt reply.

"But there's a difference in little girls. I

don't believe you ever were like me. You always think of the pleasant things first; it takes me so long to come round to them. Charlie isn't at all so. He's like you, people say;" and Mary looked sober when she remembered that it was her name, not his, that was written just under those of her parents and grandparents in the roll of Mapleton church-members.

Mrs. Clemson also looked sober. Mary's fretfulness had caused her some anxious thoughts of late, but the child seemed to be so aware of her faults, and so easily discouraged in view of them, that her mother's words were oftener for comfort than for reproof.

They were just then passing Mr. Grant's well-kept kitchen-garden, and close by the roadside some tender shoots of young corn were growing.

"See, Mary," said her mother, stopping opposite a little square of corn-hills; "Mr. Grant's last planting is fairly up, but I see the early corn is in tassel already. There will be a fine crop there before long. I wonder," she continued, "if the little corn

isn't discouraged at finding itself so far behind the rest? There is not the sign of an ear; only two or three tiny blades. To be sure, it has God's sunshine and dew and rain, but then it has just begun to grow."

Mary looked up and laughed:

"I see what you are talking about, mother."

"Yes, dear; the corn can preach now as well as it did in the fields of Judea when Jesus taught the people. See! it is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. God expects you to grow; he will never despise the tiny blade when he has the ripe corn to gather. You see that our Saviour knew all about us, my child."

If Mary had not felt a little better than she did when she started, she would have been impatient again before she got far beyond Mr. Grant's garden. Shading the path there for a little way was a tangled thicket of such shrubs and vines as love a brookside, and stretched on the bank beneath them was the gaunt, awkward figure of a man whose dark skin and straight black

hair told of Indian blood. It was very plain that he was waiting for somebody, for he looked up at the first sound of footsteps, but did not get on his feet until Mrs. Clemson and Mary were so close upon him that they started to find him there.

"Oh, Jack!" exclaimed the lady, drawing back; "you were so quiet that I did not see you at first, and thought it might be a stranger."

"I no stranger," said Jack, with a dignified air. "I wait for teacher."

Jack was one of Mrs. Clemson's Sunday-scholars—the largest, oldest and most ignorant of her class, but one who, after years of patient care and many discouragements, was giving her much comfort.

"Yes, Jack," she said; "I am very glad to see you. We shall have to walk along a little faster if we wish to go into church with the rest."

"You tell for why the bell ring to-day," said Jack as he stalked along before his teacher. "No Sunday-school, Dr. Anson say; bell ring all the same."

Jack could have asked any one of half a

dozen people what was the order of the day, and very likely had already heard all about the anniversary; but it was his fancy not to have any conversation on the subject of Sunday-school or anything serious whatever except with those whom he considered to be high dignitaries in the church.

"It is the Sunday-school's birthday, Jack," said Mary, mischievously; for she knew his whim and was trying, as the children often did, to get him to take some information from her. "The Sunday-school is fifty years old to-day—just as old as you are."

But Jack deigned no reply to this: he wanted no information unless it came from headquarters.

"I will tell you all about it," said Mrs. Clemson; "I am one of the Sunday-school's oldest children, and I ought to know."

Hearing this, Jack turned around and walked meekly by his teacher's side as she told him the story of fifty years ago:

"When corn was growing where most of Mapleton's houses now stand, and the white men's cabins were far apart in the fields, there was no house for God, and the children

were growing up as you were, Jack, before you learned about Jesus."

Jack nodded his head at this. He knew very well how that must have been.

Mrs. Clemson went on:

"A young girl who lived here then had read in God's word what Jesus had said about preaching the gospel to every creature. She said to her mother one day, 'Let us call these poor children to our house and tell them what we know of God's love to poor sinners.' So the children were invited, and came—some on horseback through the woods, and some on foot—to the little cabin where they were taught about Jesus. They heard their teacher pray to him, and they believed he was there, all unseen, to hear her."

"We no speak, but he hear," said Jack, fervently. "Poor Indian, white man, little children—all the same: his ear always open."

"Yes, Jack, always open. And he loves us all. He loved this young teacher, and watched over her work when she had gone to heaven."

"Yes," said Jack; "his heart always remember what his ear hear. I know."

"By and by," Mrs. Clemson continued, "a house was built for God, and the people say to-day, 'Let us remember how good our Father has been to teach us for more than fifty years. Let us go on as that young girl did, and tell his love to all who will hear.'"

"Teacher, that is good talk," said Jack, solemnly. "Me will remember. Poor Indian tell about him all the same."

The poor Indian's presence there sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind after years of neglect and sin was of itself an eloquent story to all who knew him and saw his tall figure pressing with the crowd of eager children into the class-room.

Charlie was there at the door, his face all aglow with excitement.

"Oh, mother!" he exclaimed, catching sight of her as she came in with Mary; "come right along in here. Please do. I've something to show you."

"Will it not keep, Charlie? I ought to find my class now. There's such a hubbub here."

But Charlie pleaded hard:

"Only for a minute. Dr. Anson has just come in to see it. The Sunday-school has a birthday present, mother, and you can see it now close by."

She turned aside into the library-room with her children for the minute Charlie asked for, and joined the little group that had followed Dr. Anson.

"Come in, Mrs. Clemson," said the good pastor; "we must all be children together to-day. See what one of our boys has sent us to remember him by on our birthday. Is it not royal?"

It was indeed a beautiful banner and worthy of Dr. Anson's enthusiasm—gay with streamers and tassels, with a broad field of deep blue, on which a snowy dove was pictured; and underneath it, in a flood of light from the opened heaven above, were these blessed words of the angels' song: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men."

"The trouble with our Sunday-school army will be that everybody will want to be standard-bearer after this.—Is it not so, boys?"

But the children were all loyal to Dr. Anson and jealous of his rights; so one little man thought he spoke the mind of the rest when he piped out, "Oh no, Dr. Anson; we mean to let *you* carry it." Whereupon everybody shouted, and the youngster shrank back into the class-room quite abashed at what he took for a storm of applause after his speech.

All the bright faces in Mapleton seemed to have gathered in the old church that day. All who did not come marching in with the banner wished they could do so, and those who did were happy to have the galleries so full of people who could look down on them with approving smiles.

When the throng had settled itself into rows of waiting faces, and the opening songs and prayer were over, and the superintendent had read his report, a stranger was introduced to address the children. Some of them had grown a little restless by this time, and here and there small heads drooped on somebody's friendly shoulders; but there was one earnest young face before him that from the first encouraged

Mr. Steadman, for that was his name. It was our little friend Mary. More than once she found the speaker's eyes fastened on her as though he had for a moment forgotten that he was talking to any one else. A few months before, she would not have looked and listened so earnestly; but now the stranger's words sank deeply into her heart, made soft by the dew of heavenly grace. He spoke of what children might do for Jesus' sake, and then told the story of a little girl named Eva, sick and deformed, who for some months had spent her strength in teaching a few poor children about the Saviour.

But we will give you Mr. Steadman's story in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

MR. STEADMAN'S STORY.

"There's not a child so small and weak
But has his little cross to take—
His little work of love and praise
That he may do for Jesus' sake."

"THERE is a little sentence we bring in at the end of our prayers, dear children, which ought to be our watchword all through life. We ask God to forgive us our sins and keep us in the right way and take us to heaven at last, *for Christ's sake.* But does not God expect us to do something for Christ's sake—something that will show that we do not forget 'what a Friend we have in Jesus'? The story of a little girl I once knew will show you what I mean by working *for Christ's sake.*

"This little girl's name was Eva; she lived in a beautiful home in a city not far from here. If loving friends and plenty of

money are all that is necessary to make one happy, Eva ought to have been one of the happiest of little people. But you will see that she needed something more than these things when I tell you that poor Eva was sick and helpless and deformed. She had not walked a step since she was three years old, and had never in her life known a well day.

"But Eva had a Friend who is able to make sunshine even in a sick-room, and hers was as pleasant for her as the fields and the woods are to most happy, healthy children. He helped her with all the troubles she had to bear, and, as your little hymn says, he was 'close beside her all the way.' In her simple prayers she often asked this precious Friend if there was not something she could do to help him in his work in the world outside of the sick-room. She heard of the poor miserable children who did not know him or love him.

"'Couldn't I help somebody to find him? God could use me if he chose, although I am a little crippled girl shut up in this room so much of the time.'

"Eva's opportunity to work for Jesus came with the bright spring weather. The same kind Hand which dresses the earth with flowers gave her strength to go out once more into the glad sunshine. The first day she could get into the little chair in which she rode about she asked Norah, her kind nurse, to take her to Brown street, a miserable place in the worst part of the city.

"'To Brown street, Miss Eva? What did put that into your head?' exclaimed the astonished Norah. 'I am sure your mamma will think shame of my taking you into such a place as that. Come, let us hunt violets in the Park; the grass is all specked with them;' and Norah turned the chair around, as though she was sure that Eva did not mean what she said.

"But she was mistaken. Eva persisted in her request to be taken to Brown street.

"'Mamma will let me go,' she said; 'I asked her.'

"Norah stood still for a moment, as though she scarcely knew what to do. She knew that Eva needed the fresh sweet air,

and that all through the cold winter days, when she was shut up in her room, she had been longing for this time of the singing of birds to come. What ailed the child?

"'Well, Miss Eva,' she said at last, 'I'm thinking you are crazy to-day; but if you must go, I suppose I'll have to take you. Only remember, when you get into the smells and the dirt, that it is not my fault. I'll wheel you out again quicker than we went in if you'll but speak the word when we get there.'

"Eva laughed over Norah's dismay, but waved her hand for her to go on.

"They came to a tall old house in the narrowest and dingiest part of Brown street.

"'Let me stop here, Norah; I see a boy I want to speak to. There! that boy. Call him, will you?'

"He was a ragged little fellow with an old torn hat pulled down over his long hair. He came up to Eva's chair with a surprised look, and bent down to hear what she had to say.

"'Will you please tell me your name?' she said, in a low, trembling voice; for

never before had she been near so rough a human being as he was.

"The boy could not hear; so he came closer. Eva shrank back, almost frightened.

"'Hold your head up, boy!' said Norah, angrily. 'It isn't for the likes of you to come so close to her.'

"'Oh, Norah,' Eva exclaimed, her eyes filling with tears, 'don't speak so to him. I want to know his name;' and, turning to the boy, she said, 'I would like to be your friend.'

"'My name is Jem, miss,' answered the boy, in a very respectful tone, looking with wonder at the sweet face of the little girl.

"'Would you like to have me read stories to you out of the Bible, Jem, and teach you to read too, and to sing hymns? I would be very glad to help you if I could do so.'

"'What is that you are saying, miss?' asked Jem, eagerly, with a dim notion in his head that she meant something good, any way.

"'Come to our house Sunday afternoons

and let me read nice stories and sing with you.'

"'Perhaps I will,' said Jem, smiling. 'I reckon that'll be jolly. When shall I come?'

"'To-morrow.'

"'I don't know about to-morrow,' said Jem, scratching his head; 'I goes across the river on Sundays, mostly.'

"'Oh, Jem, don't you know that it's God's day and you must not use it for yourself?'

"Jem stared more than ever at this; but Eva saw that he did not mind her words much, after all.

"'Come once, any way, Jem,' she said, her courage beginning to falter.

"'Yes, once, to please you. Hows'ever, it ain't the kind of Sunday for me.'

"'Here's my street and number, Jem,' said Eva, reading her card slowly over to him. 'Inquire at the door for Miss Eva. Can't you bring some of your brothers and sisters along with you?'

"'Hain't got none. But there's Bill and Jack Owen might come, and their sister Jane.'

"'Oh yes! Do bring them all,' exclaimed Eva, brightening up. 'And bring as many more as you like.'

"This was a good beginning. When Sunday afternoon came, they were all there at the door. Norah asked them up stairs into the nursery, where Eva was waiting. They all had a shy and awkward look as with anything but a pleasant manner Norah pushed the chairs into a row and bade them all sit down.

"'You'll stay, Norah?' said Eva, pleadingly.

"'Of course I will. I haven't lost my wits yet—if my betters have,' she muttered. 'What do you want next, poor dear?'

"'My big slate and a pencil, Norah. My Bible and hymn-book are here.'

"Eva's heart was full of thanksgiving to God for opening to her this way to work for him; so she did not at all mind Norah's crossness.

"The children sat there staring at her and around the room till Eva's gentle voice recalled their attention. She was opening her little hymn-book.

"'Can you sing?' she asked.

"They looked at one another, and then all began to laugh—all but Jem, who seemed to be a kind of captain among them.

"'You see, miss,' said he, edging up toward Eva and pointing with his thumb to his ragged little friends, 'none on 'em don't know nothing, no more'n I do. We can't sing or anything.'

"'Then I'll sing for you,' she said, 'and you can learn after a while. Here is a hymn about our Saviour:

> "'"Jesus loves me! This I know,
> For the Bible tells me so;
> Little ones to him belong:
> They are weak, but he is strong."'

"They listened to that very quietly, but I cannot say as much for them when Eva opened her Bible and began to read. First, Jane slipped off her chair to finger the pretty trimming on Eva's wrapper; then Jem slapped her hand for it, and this made her brother Bill so angry that he gave Jem a push which sent him headlong on the floor.

"Norah thought it was now high time for

her to interfere; so she picked Jem up, and after giving him a sound shaking cuffed his ears and sat him down on his chair with a thump.

"This was too much for Jem. He had been disgraced in the eyes of his followers when he was doing his best in the way of duty to Miss Eva. He clutched his old hat and started for the door. Poor Eva was lame, you remember, and couldn't run after him, as these little girls could, and in the confusion her voice could scarcely be heard.

"'Please, Jem, do come back!' she called; but the boy had gone, slamming the door behind him and rushing down stairs. 'Oh, what shall I do, Norah?' cried the little teacher, in distress. 'I'm sorry you took hold of him so. He'll never come back any more, I'm afraid.'

"Poor Eva's tears did more to pacify the angry children than any words could do, though they did not show it in any other way than by watching her very quietly as she lay back among her pillows, pale and weak from excitement.

"Norah seemed to feel that she had done

wrong to cross her little mistress's plans so rudely, and tried to make up for it by speaking very kindly to the children as she bustled about to get water and cologne for Eva. But the mischief was done. After a feeble effort to tell them a story, the little teacher had to give up for that afternoon.

"To Eva's great joy, and to Norah's quite evident disgust, the children agreed to come again, and to try to persuade Jem to come too, though Bill said,

"'He's a tough 'un, miss; I 'spect he'll keep clear of this place after this.'

"Bill and Jack and Jane came the next Sunday, as they had promised; but Jem was not there, though Eva had tried to find him during the week, and hoped he might heed the message she left for him at his boarding-place.

"Eva was very much disappointed at this, but she did not give up. Sunday after Sunday she spent her little strength in teaching these poor children about Jesus, and in praying that they might learn to know and love him as the Friend of sinners.

"I have never heard the result of Eva's

work with her scholars. Perhaps she never knew about it herself till she got to heaven, for not many months after this she went there to live in the presence of her Saviour. But I know that her labor was not in vain.

"One warm Sunday afternoon like this, not long before she died, one of Eva's brothers, a gay and thoughtless young man, was coming down from his room after taking a comfortable nap. Passing the nursery-door, he heard strange voices and stopped for a moment to listen. The door was a little ajar, and he could hear the children repeating the Lord's Prayer after Eva. Then she went on alone in a sweet, trembling voice, asking God to bless the feeble attempt they had made to speak and hear of Jesus. He knew what a timid, shrinking child she was, and wondered what had brought her to take such a step as this.

"'To think,' he said, 'how she is wasting her strength on these little wretches! In such warm weather too, and on Sunday afternoon, when she ought to be napping! It is more than I would do for my best friend. I must get her out of the notion.'

"But he could not persuade her to stop.

"'Why should I not teach them?' she asked. 'Do you not think they ought to know that Jesus died for them and what a Friend he is?' and she looked up into his face with such a peaceful, sunny smile that he stopped to think what this poor suffering child had to make her so much happier than he was. He could not get rid of that question. At last he went to Jesus with it, and found at those blessed feet the secret of his sister's joy. How happy she would have been to hear him

> "'Publishing to all around
> What a Saviour he had found'!

But she will know by and by, if she does not know now, what the Lord has done and is still doing through her feeble hands; for she speaks to you to-day, dear children. It was her faithful work for Jesus that brought me here with a message from him. I am Eva's brother, led to Jesus by the voice and the example of a little child like one of you."

And with this sentence Mr. Steadman closed his address.

CHAPTER III.

THE PONY PHAETON.

"Forget not, in temptation's hour,
That sin lends sorrow double power;
With hand and heart and conscience clear,
Fear God, and know no other fear."

MARY CLEMSON had taken in all of Eva's story, but the last words of the speaker—so quietly uttered that none but attentive listeners would have heard them at all—had driven every thought but one out of her mind.

"A little girl like me, and sick and deformed at that, helped this minister into the pulpit! Couldn't I do as much?" she thought.

Her young heart was so thrilled with the desire for such success as Eva's that she forgot the humble, simple faith which won it, and remembered only who and what had brought the speaker there.

Dr. Anson, the white-haired pastor, leaned forward to beckon Mr. Steadman to a seat close beside him on the platform, whispering loud enough for the eager child to hear:

"I am glad you told that story, Mr. Steadman. The children may not get the deep lesson it teaches me, but they will see how God blesses the true service of love."

"I hope I have made the right impression," replied the young man, looking again at the rows of bright faces before him. "I never so much feel the need of being careful of my words as when I talk to children. I remember what strange fancies I had about the Sunday-school stories I used to hear, and I keep wondering what the little folks are making out of what I say."

"We have only to sow the good seed and look to the Lord of the harvest for the rest, brother," said Dr. Anson, cheerily. "Some of my little flock have been giving heed to you, I see," nodding from the platform to Mary as he spoke.

The child flushed with pleasure at finding herself thus noticed. It was a very usual thing for Dr. Anson to smile at her when-

ever or wherever she caught his eye, but this time he put double meaning into his kind look. Mr. Steadman had a smile too at this, for he could not but remember the earnest face upturned to his, and how his own desire that day to do some work for Jesus had been strengthened by her fixed attention.

The service was over, and the children came crowding down the aisles to go home again. Outside of the church-door Mary found Charlie waiting with a new book his teacher had just given him for punctuality in attendance at Sunday-school for a whole year.

"Look at this book, Mary, will you? Gilt both sides, all over the red! And such a lot of pictures, too!" displaying the illustrations one after another as he fluttered through the leaves. "And isn't it thick! I tell you what, Mr. Brown knows how to buy books that suit me. I only had to give this one look to see that it was the right kind. Not dull, close print, like some of mother's big books, but loose and open—so," showing her a page of dialogue where the story must

have been very interesting to people who want easy reading.

Charlie must have thought his sister's admiration of his book hardly up to the mark, for he soon ran on and left her to walk home alone.

Mary's thoughts were all about the little sermon she had just heard.

"I might do something too," she said to herself as she walked slowly along the river-path toward home. "But then almost everybody I know in Mapleton is either a Christian already or has somebody who is wiser than I am to teach him. I wish there was a whole street full of just such poor children as Eva found."

Mary's bright dream of usefulness had carried her as far as this, when there was a sound of wheels behind her; and, looking around, she saw Emily Grant guiding her little pony phaeton up to the roadside to take her in.

"I've been looking everywhere for you, Mary," she exclaimed. "Didn't you know I've been wanting to give you a ride ever so long? Come, jump in."

"But we are almost home, Emily. Some other time will do, won't it? I thank you, all the same."

"I was going to take you farther than your own door, of course," Emily persisted. "It is growing cooler, and we shall have time for a nice little ride before tea."

Emily had been the possessor of a pony phaeton for two long weeks without once asking Mary to share her enjoyment of her new pleasure. Day after day Mary had seen her drive by, now with one friend and then with another, until she began to feel grieved at the thought that perhaps Emily did not care for her so much as once she did. But this invitation sounded just like old times. Without another thought than this, she put her foot on the low step of the carriage and sprang to a seat at her friend's side.

"We have just about time to go to High Rock," said Emily, giving her pony a little tap with her dainty new whip as she turned his head toward the cross-road which led in that direction. "I want to show you a new house there with the queerest roof you ever saw. Papa sold the land to the man who

built it, but he says now, if he had known what kind of people he was bringing into the place, he would have done his best to keep them out of Mapleton. They say that Mr. Whitby is a great gambler and horse-racer and gives Sunday dinners, and that not one of the family is ever seen inside a church. Isn't it too bad? But we sha'n't have anything to do with them, of course," said the young Pharisee, gravely, with another gentle touch of her whip on the pony's glossy side.

Mary was in a brown-study by this time.

"Emily," she said, after a short silence, "we ought not to be taking this ride to-day."

"What's the harm, Mary? Papa does not think it is wrong to take a little quiet drive on Sunday afternoons. We used to ride out in the Park after Sunday-school whenever it was pleasant last winter. Mamma didn't like it at first, but she got over her old-fashioned notions after a while; and so will you when you have seen a little more of the world."

Emily had such a superior air when she

made remarks like these that Mary, who had scarcely ever been out of Mapleton, felt quite overawed. Though Emily was only a few months older than herself, she seemed to stand on quite a pinnacle of experience, and to be as able to give advice on worldly matters as were any of her friends. But this case was quite different from the last one on which Emily had given her judgment. She might know more about the proper way to knot a sash-ribbon or do up her hair, but surely any one who read the Bible as much as did her mother, and who so often asked God to help her to train her children in the good and right way, ought to know as well as anybody how to keep Sunday properly.

"Emily," she said, firmly, "I must go home. I know my mother would not like it if she knew where I was."

"You are real provoking, Mary! I shouldn't think it would take all this time to make up your mind about taking a ride on Sunday. Just as if my papa did not know what is right!"

Mary's eyes filled with tears.

"I'm very sorry," she said, "but, you see, Emily, I was so glad to have the ride that at first I forgot what mother would say; and my mother *does* know what is right. I must mind her even if I offend you."

"Of course!" said Emily, pettishly; "I'm sure I don't want to lead you astray. But how am I to turn around in this narrow place in the road, I'd like to know? Going down hill too! Do you suppose it will be very sinful if I drive on till we get a little more room?"

"Don't be unkind, Emily. You know I am not setting myself up to be any better than you are. Turn around where you like; I can get out and walk if you will let me."

But Emily was jerking at the pony's head by this time, and he, excited by her angry twitching at the reins, and uncertain, after all, what she meant, turned first to one side and then to the other, and finally concluded to go his own way and dash down hill in spite of Emily's efforts to stop him. She might have succeeded in doing this but for a sudden flash of lightning from the cloud

that had been gathering its forces all the afternoon and was now darkening half the sky as it sped before the wind.

The poor pony, startled by the peal of thunder which followed, sprang wildly to the side of the road just where a young sapling standing out beyond its fellows could catch the wheels of the little carriage and hold it back while he struggled to get on. The snapping shafts soon set him at liberty, and away he ran through the woods and out of sight, leaving the frightened girls clinging to the half-overturned phaeton.

"Oh dear! What will papa say?" sobbed Emily. "He will think it is all my fault, and I am sure it wasn't. It is going to rain, too. What shall we do?"

The big drops were coming already, and another flash and thunder-clap unnerved the poor girl entirely.

"We shouldn't stay here under these trees," said Mary. "We had better get out and draw the phaeton under shelter."

Scarcely knowing what she did, Emily followed the directions. The cushions were turned, the apron unfolded and the best hats

hastily taken off and tucked under it, and the two girls went bravely out under the open sky, from which the rain soon began to pour in torrents.

In the roar of the storm the sound of approaching footsteps was unheard, until, turning a bend in the road, Indian Jack appeared leading the crestfallen pony, which he had caught not very far from the scene of the disaster.

"Oh, Jack," exclaimed Emily, "I am so glad you found him. I was afraid poor little Brutus was gone entirely."

"I come back to find somebody," said Jack. "He no go far till I catch him. Mr. Grant's new horse, I know. I mend all so you go home all right by and by," said Jack, with a solemn look skyward.

There was a ray of comfort in that. The "somebody" whom Brutus had so rudely upset was feeling very humble just then. What papa would say was uppermost in Emily's mind; while poor Mary, who had felt the twinges of a very tender conscience all the time, relieved her mind somewhat by confessing to her companion in distress

what she said and thought that afternoon about Charlie's misbehavior.

"That was just like other folks," was Emily's comment. "Our Jamie is always doing such things, but papa does not worry. He says there isn't much to be expected of children."

"My mother says that what we are going to be when we are old we are beginning to be now: if we want to be tall, straight trees, we must not grow crooked when we are little saplings."

"Of course not," said Emily; "but who wants to be thinking about such sober things all the while? I leave all that to papa and mamma. Besides, you see, Mary, I am not a professor of religion, and you are."

They rode on in silence for a few minutes after that.

"How little difference there is between us, after all!" thought Emily.

"I wish I was a better Christian," thought Mary. "Then I could tell Emily that she has got to answer to God for herself, if she is so young."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROMISED EXCURSION.

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."

MRS. CLEMSON'S home on the river-bank was just far enough from the bustling little village of Mapleton to escape its noise and dust, and to make a difference between the narrow gardens there and the broad fields and woodlands that were spread before its windows. But, pleasant as that landscape was, the children were longing for the sea. The beautiful river ever in sight was always carrying their thoughts with its bright waters to that ocean toward which it flowed.

Mary and Charlie used to sit beside their mother in the summer evenings and listen to the plashing of the waves along the river-bank at the foot of the garden, and wish for

the day when they should hear the breakers rolling up the beach and watch the sea-birds dipping their white wings in the surf, but until that summer they had never had an opportunity to go. They were now looking forward to a long, bright holiday on the beach with their mother. She had promised to take them on some pleasant Saturday in August. The children had talked so much about it that the Grants had made up their minds to join the little party whenever a day could be fixed upon to suit the two mothers.

"It is too delightful, mother!" exclaimed Mary as she bounded up the steps one afternoon. "Mrs. Grant says that next Saturday will suit her, if it is convenient for you. She will take all the children along, even the baby. To think of having that dear little pet with us to take into the water! I hope she won't cry. Mrs. Grant says that Elsie shall make turnovers for our lunch all around, and one of her splendid frosted mountain-cakes. Mr. Grant says that we must go to a hotel to dinner, and there we shall see what it is to sit down with such

great tables full of people and call for everything we ever heard of to eat."

Mrs. Clemson smiled at the climax of Mary's speech.

"Where did you ever hear of anybody's doing that?" she asked.

"The Davages say they do; they have lived half their lives in a hotel. You would laugh, mother, to hear Fanny Davage tell how she used to keep the waiters running and then leave the things they brought her."

"I do not think I should laugh, Mary; such waste is very painful to me. The Golden Rule forbids all such trifling as that with the feelings of others."

"But about this trip, mother. Aren't you glad we are going? Everything is planned so nicely, just as we wish to have it."

"Yes, dear, indeed I am. I cannot see anything to hinder our having a very delightful time."

"You won't give up going for anything but rain, will you, mother? May I tell Mrs. Grant so?" said Mary, just ready to

take flight across the orchard again toward that lady's seat under the trees.

"Stop, my child! You forget I make no such rash promises as that. Many other things besides rain may hinder us, but, so far as I know now, we can go better then than at any other time; for since you went to school this morning I have had a letter from Aunt Julia Brainard saying that she may be expected here about Saturday of next week, as she has arrived in Boston and intends to run down here to spend a Sunday with us. She wants to hear her old pastor, Dr. Anson, once more before she sails for Europe."

"I am so glad she isn't coming next Saturday, because Mrs. Grant is expecting company too the day Aunt Julia will come."

Mary tripped away through the shrubbery to tell Mrs. Grant of her mother's approval, as happy as the prospect of a visit to the seashore could make her.

Friday afternoon came. How many times that day the young people crossed the orchard between the two houses it would be difficult to tell, but it is certain that there

was a great amount of business to be transacted among them, and more to tell about the sea than had ever before been rehearsed at one time.

The Grant boys, who had been twice to the shore, considered themselves veterans in the matter of surf-bathing, but Charlie, who was a great reader, could tell stories twice as long and as large as theirs when they began to talk about sea-serpents and coral-reefs and pearl-diving, and about other wonders of the deep.

"We may see a whale," he said, confidently. "One stranded on the Jersey coast not very long ago. I saw a man who helped to drag the big animal ashore."

"'Fish,' you mean," said Jamie, who thought that for once he had caught Charlie napping.

"No; I mean 'animal.' A whale isn't a fish."

Jamie was disposed to argue the point, and Charlie offered to settle it by a reference to the *Cyclopædia;* but nobody agreed to that.

"We can't go to the house to study a musty old book," said Harry. "I'll take

your word for it, Charlie: you generally know what you are talking about."

"I'll show you some time what I have read about a whale's being an animal," said Charlie. "In the same book I read about the whale that discovered the North-west Passage."

"How was that?" queried Jamie.

"Easy enough. A whale was once captured away up near Baffin's Bay. He was a big, strong fellow, and they tried hard to hold him by the whale-line, but he got away with it, harpoon and all. About two years afterward the same ship was on the other side of North America, and they caught a whale with a great scar on his back. When they came to cut him up, there was the harpoon they had lost. They were certain of it, because it had the ship's name and the date of making stamped on the iron. Now, that whale didn't come to that side of the continent by going around Cape Horn, because it was a narwhale—a kind that never crosses the equator. Of course he could not come overland, and so he must have found a way by the Arctic Ocean—the

North-west Passage that sailors have tried so hard to find."

"If that whale had been a porpoise, he wouldn't have been chased around the world, would he?" asked Jamie.

"Of course not; nobody cares for a big, lazy porpoise. I'd rather be a whale, though, and be worth chasing," said Charlie.

"So would I," echoed two or three voices in the little group under the apple tree.

"Bravo! bravo! That's the way to talk, boys." Mr. Grant had joined the party in time to hear Charlie express his sentiments. "I was just looking around for good soldiers, and I've found three of them. I want two wide-awake boys"—looking at Jamie and Harry—"for special service."

"How soon, papa?"

"Immediately. One must go over to Harrison's Bridge and watch there until Mr. Dunlap comes along; he is going to meet the five-o'clock train, and he may come that way. If he does, give him this note, which he will read and save us both much trouble. The other boy must take the turnpike and wait for him at Turner's Lane. In

case he comes that way, give him this note and ask him to attend to it immediately."

"Can't John go?" faltered Jamie, whose heart had begun to sink as soon as he found the story-telling must give way to going on an errand.

"No; I've other work for John. Besides that, he could take only one boy's place, and I need two messengers."

"I'll go, for one," exclaimed Charlie.

"I'll go with you," chimed in Jamie.

"Must I go alone?" asked Harry, anxiously.

"Yes; why not? I'd be ashamed of you if you were not man enough for that."

Harry had half a mind to grumble, as he usually did, over Jamie's grasping spirit; but his father's last remark silenced him, and, taking the note, he started off without another word.

Mr. Dunlap did not pass by Turner's Lane, but over Harrison's Bridge, where the boys met him almost as soon as they took their station there.

"Now that our errand is done, we can go back and have some fun," said Jamie.

Charlie thought they had better go first and tell Harry that they had found Mr. Dunlap, so that he need not watch any longer.

"Oh, bother! What's the use of that? He'll hear the town-clock strike five and come back of himself."

"I'm going to meet him, any way," said Charlie; "there's no fun in waiting there alone for nothing. Come, Jamie!" and the generous little fellow started off across the orchard, determined to do what he thought was right and kind, even if he had to go alone. Jamie followed, of course, grumbling at first, but soon joining with great glee in the race with Charlie for Turner's Lane. There they found Indian Jack at the blacksmith-shop where he sometimes worked.

"Let us go and ask the old fellow what he thinks about the weather to-morrow," suggested one; and in they all rushed and surrounded the anvil where he stood as helper.

Jack was very much pleased to see the happy little company come pouring into his dingy quarters to consult him. He put his

long forefinger in his mouth to moisten it, and held it up to find the direction of the wind, as Indians do when there is very little air stirring and they want to know from what quarter the wind is blowing.

"Plenty sunshine to-morrow," he said.

"Are you sure, Jack, that it will shine all day?"

"Sure 'nough."

"Hurrah, then!" the boys shouted; and they all rushed home together, without giving the old man time to collect his wits enough to ask them what they wanted a fair day for.

So the sun went peacefully down behind the hills across the river, and the beautiful harvest-moon arose over the tree-tops to give glory to the night. The children fell asleep at last, ready to wake with the birds in the morning and start by one of the first trains that came thundering along down the river-valley. But the birds had the best of it. Many a young robin had washed his face in the dew as he went tripping about in search of belated worms that morning before those children were up and dressed. But it was

time enough to be astir when the last child came racing down stairs to see Mr. Grant off (for he went first) and pleaded with him to be "sure and come."

"And please bring some candies, papa," whispered Emily, with a housewifely air, but so loudly that all the children heard and joined in the chorus.

It could not be expected that breakfast would be of much consequence, when so much was to follow it; so all were ready long before the great Mapleton omnibus came lumbering along the road to carry the little party to the station. It took some time to stow in Mrs. Grant and her five children and the nurse; but when that was done, they were not long in driving over to Mrs. Clemson's cottage. Mary and Charlie, with their lunch-baskets, stood in the sunshine on the piazza steps, trying to be as dignified as possible, for they saw a trunk on the top of the omnibus and a stranger inside looking over their way. As their mother came out she caught the lady's eye.

"Is it possible?" she exclaimed, eagerly

hastening forward and giving both hands to an elderly lady in mourning who was alighting. "My dear aunt, you are very welcome, and these little ones too," stooping to kiss a little boy and girl who came shyly down the steps after their grandmother. "I am glad to see them. I was afraid, auntie, you would not feel like bringing them along. —These are your little orphan cousins," turning to where Mary and Charlie stood in blank amazement at this unlooked-for turn of affairs.

"My dear," said Mrs. Brainard—for that was the visitor's name—laying her hand on her niece's arm, "I am sure I am breaking in on some pleasant plan of yours. Do not let me detain you. I meant to have sent you word, but it was impossible to decide about my plans till it was too late to get a letter off. I might have telegraphed, but I thought it would not be necessary, as you were expecting me soon."

"Indeed, auntie," said Mrs. Clemson, "I could not think of going; and I know you are too tired to join us."

Mary saw from the first moment what a

great disappointment was in store for her. Her mother would never leave the invalid aunt who could stay so short a time, and of course the children must stay with their little cousins. There was but scant time for discussion, however, and almost before they knew it Mrs. Clemson had wished the Grants a pleasant journey and the omnibus-driver was cracking his whip on the road to Mapleton.

All the sunshine seemed to have faded out of the world for Mary. Slowly and sullenly she followed her mother into the house with the quiet little brother and sister, while Charlie, poor boy! unable to control his feelings under so thin a disguise, rushed off up the lane with his dog Fido to have a good cry behind the woodpile.

Mrs. Clemson had time, even in all the bustle of this arrival, to note the shade on her little daughter's face; so, stooping down, she whispered gently:

"I am sorry for your disappointment, my darling, but be as cheerful as possible. We will try it again."

"I can't be cheerful, mother," sobbed

Mary, fairly breaking down now as the spring of her sorrow was touched. "It was real mean and hateful in Aunt Julia to let us children stay at home."

"Mary! Mary! Must I send you to your room to ponder your hasty words?"

"It is just what I think; I can't help saying it. And I'd just as soon go to my room as not," said Mary, angrily, shaking off the hand laid in gentle reproof upon her shoulder and running up stairs.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT.

"Thank God for all the good we know,
And trust him for the rest."

IT was a long time before Mary could make up her mind to come down stairs again and be in the least entertaining to her little cousins. She heard Charlie's voice encouraging Fido to perform some of his tricks for them and listened to the cheerful hum of voices from the parlor; and, half ashamed, yet determined not to be too much pleased with anything, she came down and joined the children on the piazza.

It was a tiresome day to the poor little girl, from whose heart all happy thoughts and holy desires seemed to have flown. But the good Shepherd had his eye upon the wandering lamb who had so lately sought his fold, and he called her back again as

tenderly as ever. He suffered her to see how helpless she was without him, and how soon she might fall again into the tempter's snare when she left the Saviour's side.

Mrs. Brainard had been so much engaged in talking over old times and places that she had found but little opportunity for more than a few words with Mary when she first arrived; but at sunset, when they went to take a stroll down by the river-side, she lingered behind the rest to tell her little niece how sorry she had been so sorely to disappoint her.

"I know," she said, "you will bear it patiently, my child, when I tell you about the dear children I have brought here with me. They saw a precious mother laid under the sod only a few weeks ago, and I am taking them now from every friend they have ever known to live among strangers in a distant home. I wanted your dear mother to see the children of her old playmate before I took them across the sea. Be thankful, dear child, that you have no such loss to mourn over."

Mrs. Brainard was wiping her eyes, and

Mary's tears came too, though she knew but little about the sorrow that brought them.

"I do not want to make this a sad visit to you little ones," said Mrs. Brainard; "I speak of this great loss only that you may be loving and patient with these motherless children."

"I will be, auntie," said Mary, pressing the hand she held. "I hope I didn't make them feel bad this morning when I wasn't glad to see them."

"I think they did not notice it. I am sure I did not, though I knew you must have been disappointed to see the others drive off without you. I think you and Charlie behaved very well about it."

Mary hung her head.

"I don't know about Charlie," she said. "He is almost always good, but I wasn't then."

"How was it, Mary? Do you think it was wrong to be disappointed?"

"I don't know exactly, auntie; everything seems mixed up about right and wrong now. It was so beautiful and easy to be good this

morning," said the child, her eyes filling with tears.

"Ah, little girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Brainard; "that is the way with us all. We find ourselves out when trouble comes upon us: that is why our heavenly Father leads us through it. He knows how we need Jesus, and how apt we are to forget it and depend on ourselves; so he shows us our weakness and ignorance and sin till we feel it and call to him for help. You have been telling him about this rough place, haven't you?"

Mary hesitated a moment:

"I did not feel two weeks ago as I do now. I then wanted to do right all the time."

"Do you think good wishes or good feelings will save you, my dear?"

"Jesus saves me," was the low reply.

"Yes, Mary, and Jesus only. Keep looking to him even now, when your heart is so dulled by sin that it seems dead to all good. There is life and healing in a sight of our Saviour."

"I think, auntie, it would be such a good thing if we could say we love the Lord Jesus and mean to serve him, and then go right

on and do it and not give him any more trouble. I thought it would be so," she continued, sadly.

"Yes, Mary; it would indeed be a precious thought that we never had grieved our best Friend; but, since none of us can say that, we can love and praise him the more because he is willing to forgive and forget all."

Mrs. Brainard's visit, so unwelcome at first, had given the children much pleasure as well as profit. One of the kind things she did while she was at Mapleton—and she said and did a great many—was to invite Mrs. Clemson and her children to spend some time with her at the seashore. The visit was talked over as much as though such a thing had never before been mentioned.

It seemed like a dream at first to Mary and Charlie. They had traveled so little that the trip was as much to them as a journey across the ocean would be to those who had seen more of the world. But they settled down at last to the feeling that all their delightful pictures of such a visit were about to be realized.

Some serious thoughts came then with all the rest.

Mary came skipping out on the piazza one morning, and found Charlie sitting on the step whittling out a new tongue for his chip-cart.

"School is over for six weeks and we are going to the seashore," she exclaimed, as though the news was entirely fresh and her happiness had run over for the first time. "I am glad, after all, that our visit is going to happen just as it is, aren't you, Charlie? We stay so much longer, and then George and Kittie will be so glad to have us for company, poor lonesome little things!"

Charlie was too busy to answer right away, or even to think much of what Mary was saying. He was at work at a tough knot in his stick. When that was ready for smoothing over he replied:

"Yes, I like it just as it is. Mother said it would all turn out right, and she knows."

"But we came pretty near missing all this, didn't we?" said Mary, thoughtfully. "If the driver had come straight from Mapleton, as he said he would, instead of stop-

ping to pick up passengers, and if auntie had taken a carriage, we should have just missed her. Then she wouldn't have been sorry for us and invited us to the shore."

"I know it," said Charlie, "but it was God who meant to be good to us, all the same."

Charlie had been talking over this subject with his mother the night before, and her firm faith in God's power and wisdom had made a deep impression on his young heart; so now, when his sister seemed to look at their day's disappointment without thinking of God's hand in it, his thoughts went back to his mother's words:

"You see, Mary, God had some good reason for keeping us home that day. Perhaps, if we had gone, something might have happened to us. You remember how Dr. Anson told us the other night about a man who was going to sea and didn't get off?"

"I have forgotten, or perhaps I wasn't there when he told it," said Mary.

"The story I mean was such a good one! There was once a man who wanted to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a certain ship. He

was hurrying down to the ferry-boat that was to take him to this vessel—it was the last trip of the ferry-boat before the vessel sailed—and he was rushing along, for he knew he hadn't much time, when, as he was crossing a street, the wind came in such a gust that it blew off his hat. Well, he wanted his hat, of course; and he chased it and chased it, and it was just before him ever so far. He would stoop to pick it up, and then the wind would whirl it away. But he thought every minute he would catch it. At last he did, and ran down to get on the ferry-boat. But it had gone; it was quite out in the stream. Of course he felt dreadfully about it, but wasn't he glad afterward?"

"Why?" asked Mary, with wondering eyes.

"Because the ship he was trying to reach went to sea and was never heard of afterward."

"Was that the reason you didn't mind so much staying at home that day?"

"That was what stopped my feeling so bad about it," said Charlie, whittling away

again. "We couldn't go without mother, you know, and she couldn't go; so I thought it likely God had kept us at home for some good reason like that."

"But nothing happened to the Grants," said Mary. "I don't believe God hindered us because he wanted to keep us out of danger."

Charlie put down his stick and looked puzzled:

"You always bother me, Mary, when I try to explain things. You make more questions on top of the old ones."

Charlie looked very much injured.

"I haven't made any questions, that I know of," said Mary. "I can't help thinking, can I?"

Mrs. Clemson came to the open window just then, and Mary eagerly turned to her:

"Why was it, do you suppose, mother, that we couldn't go to the seashore last week? Charlie says—"

Mrs. Clemson knew they had been having a little dispute, for she had heard some of it:

"Let me answer your question, Mary,

without going over what either of you has said. God often turns us out of our way for great and good reasons that we cannot always see or understand, any more than Fido knew why I so roughly broke up his nap on the kitchen-hearth this morning. I knew the great tea-kettle would boil over in a minute, and I couldn't lift it off; so I dragged the poor little dog away to keep him from being scalded."

"I think it is pleasant to know *why* God does things, don't you, mother?" said Mary.

"Yes, I do, dear child; but I have learned to trust my dear heavenly Father whether I know his reasons or not. When we have really settled in our hearts that God is the best friend we have, and knows more of what is good for us than we can possibly tell him, we are not distressed when we cannot see what he means. We trust him just as Willie Evans trusts his dear father, who leads his poor little blind boy along past here every day. Do you not see what a smile Willie always has when his father takes his hand? It is not because he can see his way any better, but because he is so

sure of his father's love and wisdom that he feels as safe as though he had the use of his eyes."

"Yes, mother," said both children, with voices much softened; for Willie Evans was an illustration of trust which they could understand at a glance.

"But I think," continued Mrs. Clemson, "that I can see one very good reason why God hindered us that day. He takes different ways of showing us what is in our hearts. It is well to have our eyes opened, isn't it, Mary?"

"I thought of that," said Mary, without looking up to meet the kind but earnest gaze of her mother; "Aunt Julia talked to me about it."

"Did she? I am thankful to her. It was a good thing to have her come; and if she taught my little daughter in God's truth, I see another reason to be glad we did not carry out our plan."

The happy day came at last. This time their preparations were very different, for they need take no lunch along, and trunks instead of baskets were to be packed. Mary

was up so early in the morning that she had to open the shutters wide to see how to put on the clothes her mother had so carefully laid out the night previous. Long before she was ready, however, Charlie was rapping at her door, and shouting out his wish that she should "hurry up and come down stairs to fold up and strap the bathing-clothes."

Again the stage came rattling up from Mapleton to take them to the station, and the Grants came across the orchard to see them off with many kind wishes for a safe and pleasant journey. When they were in the cars at last, gliding along past familiar streets and houses, there settled down on the faces of the children a quiet look of satisfaction which their mother knew was born of pleasant thoughts. She often glanced over at them as they so contentedly sat looking out of the car-windows, and she felt thankful that they had so much to enjoy. Everything was new to them.

Mrs. Clemson took a carriage, when they arrived in New York, to drive through the city to the boat which was to take them

to their final destination. How many strange sights they saw as they rode along!—the tall houses in close, dark ranks; the dingy, stunted trees; the paved streets; the gay shop-windows; and the busy throng that crowded the sidewalks like a great procession that had not time to look up. The children were dumb with wonder.

The policemen impressed Charlie more than anything else. For a long time afterward he was not sure whether he would be a policeman or a minister when he came to be a man. Always before he had said that he meant to preach, but these tall men in blue uniforms and gilt stars who paced along so grandly, and who could stop the mighty stream of omnibuses with a wave of the hand, quite unsettled his plans for life. He was surprised that his mother, when they got out of the carriage at the pier, dared to go up to one who stood with folded arms and ask him a simple question about their way. The policeman could not answer. He said, "I don't know, mum; I'm quite green, mum," and colored up to the roots of his hair.

"Well," thought Charlie, quite taken aback that his notions of these kings of the street should suffer such a fall, "I suppose even the President is green at first."

A short ride in the steamboat brought them to their journey's end. Aunt Julia and her little grandchildren were at the landing to meet them. Mary had grown tired of being in a crowd of people who did not think it worth while to notice her. She had always lived among dear friends; almost everybody in Mapleton had a kind word and a smile for her, and she was quite homesick for familiar faces when she caught sight of her friends on the pier. How sorry she was, when she and her mother had time to talk it over together, that she had given them so cold a greeting when they came to Mapleton to see her! She resolved to make it all up now by entirely devoting herself to their pleasure. We shall see how she succeeded in her effort.

Reaching the Sea Shore. Page 74.

CHAPTER VI.

LOOKING TO JESUS.

"There are briers besetting every path
Which call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere."

IT was a great hotel at which Mrs. Brainard was staying. There were long piazzas and long stairs and long halls with rows upon rows of doors all the way down each side of them. They followed the man with their trunk on his shoulders till they thought he was never coming to a stopping-place. But he put it down at last in a pleasant little room whose windows overlooked the shore. The fresh breeze was stirring the white curtains, and they could hear the ceaseless roar of the ocean as soon as they stopped their lively chatter to listen.

"Oh, mother," exclaimed Mary, clapping

her hands, "we can see the sun rise out of the water from here. That must be the east out there. Isn't it splendid?"

Charlie, who just then had but one idea in his mind, was tugging away at the strap that held the bathing-clothes as if he could not get into the bundle fast enough. In his haste he was in a fair way to make the strap tighter than before, if Aunt Julia's skillful fingers had not come to his aid.

The little party were soon ready for a walk on the beach. Mary would have liked to take her mother's hand and listen to the very interesting conversation about storms and shipwrecks she was holding with her aunt, but she had not forgotten that the good resolutions made on the way up from the steamboat must be put into practice to make them worth anything; so she walked along with Kittie just behind the two ladies, near enough to hear what they were saying.

But Kittie had a mind of her own about most things, and was very willing to express it.

"We had better go this way," said she, drawing Mary toward another and shorter

path to the shore. "Charlie and George have gone down here to see Ponto swim after sticks."

"Hadn't we better hear the end of Aunt Julia's story?" whispered Mary, coaxingly.

"What was it? I didn't hear the first of it. Any way, let's go down and see where the boys have gone;" and away ran the little girl, beckoning Mary to follow.

"I'll come in a minute. Can't you wait?"

But Kittie had gone.

"Now I can stay altogether," thought Mary. "Kittie has left me."

But she had lost the thread of the story while she was fighting with conscience. She knew that this was not keeping her resolution.

"Please, Aunt Julia," she said, with rather a troubled look, "won't you tell me the rest of this story another time? I must go with Kittie now."

"Certainly; but do not think, Mary, that you must go with that child all the time," said Mrs. Brainard. "You are older and enjoy different things."

Mrs. Clemson so well knew what was in

her daughter's mind that she felt like giving her a little help just here in her struggle against selfishness:

"You will feel better to go, my dear;" and then, bending down, she whispered, "Remember how Jesus pleased not himself."

That settled the question. Mary was strong enough in a moment to run on, leaving the pleasant story unfinished. She had felt that it was right to be obliging and to forget herself in doing for others, but she did not remember, till reminded of it, that the love of Jesus is the best motive of all for being unselfish.

"It was only the other day I saw it so plainly," thought she. "Am I always going to forget so? I must try and remember, if I have to watch all the time."

She was very happy for the rest of the day in her unselfish efforts to amuse the younger children. She had her eye on Jesus—not doing some great work to be praised for it, but humbly serving him in the little things he set before her to prove whether or not she was like him. That night she felt as

she had done several times before—sure that she had found the right way to please her Saviour, and that she could go right on in this way without so much trouble as she had been having.

That evening the little party sat out on the piazza until after the children's bedtime. The sea-breeze was very refreshing after the glare and the heat of the day, and the stars were shining out in all the glory of a clear and moonless night. The plashing of the waves along the shore and the sound of distant music, filling the soft night-air, brought soothing thoughts to Mary. She was satisfied and happy after a well-spent day, and the sweet voices to which she listened seemed to echo her heart's desire to walk henceforth in wisdom's path of peace.

"Mother," she whispered, drawing closer to her side, "it seems as peaceful as heaven here, doesn't it? I would like to stay always."

"I am glad you can say so, dear," replied Mrs. Clemson, "though I think the peace is in your own heart."

"It's inside and outside too, mother. It

seems to me I'm going to remember now about the right way."

"I hope so, I'm sure," said Mrs. Clemson. "But what makes you ever forget it, dear child? When we found that new and pleasant path to Mapleton last summer, we never took the old one again."

"But this is different," said Mary. "I can see these two ways right before my eyes."

"You have seen the way of life, my child, as surely as you ever saw the river-path to Mapleton, and you know how entirely distinct it is from the path in which you walked that miserable Saturday."

"I lost sight of Jesus altogether that time, mother. I did not at all want to do as he does."

"What makes you want to be like him to-day?"

"You reminded me how he 'pleased not himself.'"

"What if there is no one to remind you?"

"I don't know," said Mary, in a distressed tone. "You make me think of everything I am afraid of."

"My darling," replied Mrs. Clemson, tenderly, "I want to teach you what to do with these fears of yours. If you were walking and talking with Jesus as the Marys did, and Peter, James and John did, you would have his sweet counsel and reproof all the way. He would call you back when you wandered, hold up your steps when you stumbled and chide you when you failed to take him at his word."

"Wouldn't it be pleasant, mother?" exclaimed Mary, with a wistful look in her eyes that touched Mrs. Clemson to the heart. She remembered the days when she felt just as her daughter now did. "You and I would have left all and followed him had we lived then; you would have given him a place to lay his head. There would have been two more Marys to minister to him, and perhaps he might have said something to me that would have been written in the Bible."

"He comes as close to us now, Mary, as ever he did in the days of his flesh. When he was passing from his disciples' sight, he told them he was not leaving them alone, but that a Comforter was coming who would

remind them of all that he had said just as they needed it. Sometimes, when he lived on earth, they had to leave him a while, and so missed some pleasant lesson he was teaching to others. Once, when the disciples were traveling with him on the road to Galilee, he grew weary and sat down by a well to rest, while they went on to the city to buy meat. While they were gone he had that long talk with the woman of Samaria, of which John tells us. Only two of them had that walk with him in the country, when, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.'"

"How sorry must the rest have been to miss such a Bible lesson as that!" exclaimed Mary—"almost as sorry as Thomas was when they all had that good time with Jesus while he was away."

"It is different now, Mary," said her mother. "He can talk by the Holy Spirit just as well with a poor Martha at her work as he can with a Mary who takes time to sit at his feet. We need not miss a single parable because we must go to another city, nor

fail to hear his voice because we do not sit next to him at the table in John's seat. His last words were, 'Lo, I am with you *alway;*' and by that he meant that his Spirit would never leave us."

The next morning, as Mary stood by her table helping Kittie to dress, she saw a paper fastened against her mirror-frame. Looking closer, she saw these precious promises, written by her mother's hand in large, fair letters:

HE SHALL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS

AND

BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE,

WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU.

Mary knew that these words told what Christ said the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, would do for his disciples

CHAPTER VII.

CLOUDS IN THE SKY.

MARY'S life in this great seashore hotel was so different from that in her simple country home that to her it was quite like a new existence. The splendid carriages, the bright-robed, butterfly children flitting about the great parlors, so cheery and gay at night, the soft, sweet music, the dancers with their chat and smiles,—all made her feel that she had come to a spot where life could be one long holiday. She had been brought up to think of it quite differently, for Mrs. Clemson had so little of this world's riches that Mary and Charlie, in their loving sympathy with their mother's cares, had even thus early in life learned many profitable lessons in self-reliance and economy. But here, in this pleasure-seeking crowd, she was quite dazzled by the glitter of the

world. For a little while her old life seemed to her to be tame and dull, and some of its best plans for happiness faded out of sight. She did not think what a change had come over her until one night when she sat with her mother by their chamber-window talking over the day, as they often did together.

"I should like to live here always, wouldn't you, mother?"

"I do not think I should," was the quiet reply.

"Why not? All day long I am happy as a bird. That is pleasant, isn't it?"

"Certainly, and I am enjoying with you my temporary freedom from care. But I do not wish to live always thus without set duties to perform; my path of duty is plain, and I shall be willing to go back to it. And when the time comes for you to turn to study again, I hope you will take hold of it as do the birds which you feel so much like. What busy lives they lead, with their food-seeking and their nest-building!"

"Oh dear!" sighed Mary as the old memories came back; "I wish I did not have to work so hard for all that I know. I cannot

bear to think of going back to that wretched old schoolroom to dig into grammar and arithmetic all winter. Just to think of it!"

Mary's face, so bright when she came in, was now all clouded over.

"Suppose you stay out of it, my dear," said Mrs. Clemson.

"Not go to school any more? What would I do for an education?"

"That is a very important question, Mary, but you seemed so disturbed at the prospect before you that I thought it would be well to look at the other side."

"I do not think you understand me at all, mother. I know I must work and study, but I wish—"

What she wished Mary left unsaid. She had turned away from her mother to look dreamily out of the window.

Like a vast floor the sea stretched away before her; across it the rising moon had made a broad and silvered pathway almost to her feet. The music from the hall below filled the night with melody. Everything outside was like a bewitching dream.

"I cannot help wondering," she exclaimed,

at last, speaking out the thought which had broken in upon her wish, "why it should be such slow, hard work to get anything in this world. I wish it wasn't so; I wish we could always go right on as we are doing here. I am so happy! I don't see that you are, mother, but then I am not like you. I am glad it will be a good long while before I get to be old."

"So am I, my child," said her mother, smiling. "You cannot be half so glad as I am that you are only a child and may be expected to think and talk as children do. I trust your heavenly Father will give you plenty of time to learn all needful lessons, or else, if he means to shorten your years, that he will show you his great truths in some of his quick, short ways. I know from experience how much you have to learn about him and yourself and the world in which you live. But he can teach you. Look out of the window now, and see how wonderful he is in power."

A heavy bank of cloud which had been lying low in the east for hours had become heaped up mountain-high since last they

looked. The soft light of the moon was resting on its topmost peaks, making them appear as though they were crowned with snow. But suddenly all the vast pile was lighted up from within as by some hidden fire. Instantly every other light was paled, and all the wide landscape shone out as if it were day—the hotels up and down the shore with their flagstaffs and bathing-houses, the wide sandy road with its carriages rolling by, the groups of people strolling along the beach, and, beyond all, the broad, gleaming ocean itself.

"It is wonderful," exclaimed Mary. "How soon God can light up the world when he gets ready! But I am glad he chooses to do it by sunshine instead of by such fireworks as these. He could do it in one way as well as in another, couldn't he?"

"Yes; all things are possible with God. But if he chose to give us light and heat in lightning-flashes, we should still be as able as we are now to trace his wisdom and love in the plan. We do not know how he manages in those far-off worlds of which we can learn so little," said Mrs. Clemson, looking

to the stars. "Their sky and scenery, their plants and animal life, and the very air they breathe, may differ so much from ours that if we were to drop down among the inhabitants there we might not live long enough to give a single glance at the wonders around us. Our lungs might be as unable to endure the atmosphere of other worlds as they would to breathe freely in the depths of the sea. But I believe that if God has made those worlds homes for any immortal souls, he has not failed to reveal himself to them as a loving, wise and patient Father."

"I wonder if they have to work as we do, and save their money and go without things, when other people have so much that they are wasting it?"

Mrs. Clemson smiled at the enumeration of Mary's trials, but drew her daughter more closely to her.

"Is not this way of thinking something new for you, dear? Is it one of the deep troubles," she asked, looking into the face half turned away from her gaze, "or is it only a passing cloud that will float away after a good night's rest?"

"It isn't either one or the other, mother: it is a bother; and I don't at all feel as I used to."

"And you cannot settle in your mind who is to blame for it all, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, I can," said Mary, quickly: "it was Eve. I shouldn't think she would be happy even in heaven. I cannot forgive her sometimes when I think what good easy times we might have had if it had not been for her. Doesn't everybody feel so?"

"If everybody did," replied her mother, "it would not make it right. God provided a wonderful and an all-sufficient remedy for sin and its effects when he shut up Eden and left us in this world of briers and thorns. He means that we shall get back all we lost through the sin of Eve, and a thousand times more."

"I know all that, but there are the briers yet. I haven't but one nice dress to wear here, and the Blakes have a dozen, I should think, and all so pretty and becoming that I cannot keep my eyes off them. Then, when I go home, there is my arithmetic and those awful sums on the blackboard,

with Miss Williams hurrying me up and everybody looking on to see."

"Dear child," said her mother, soothingly, "I know all about it. You are very sensitive, and you find your share of the trials of this life without going very far. It was just so with me."

"But," said Mary, still bent on justifying herself in her discontentment, "there is a great difference between remembering such things and being in the midst of them, with all the briers sticking in and more coming as you go on."

"I know that too, Mary," said her mother, in a graver tone; "but let me tell you that between your life and mine there is another difference which I trust will not last long. I go to Jesus with *all* my briers; you take part of yours to him, but try to manage most of them alone. There is arithmetic, for instance—a beautiful branch of truth, but one which is giving you some trouble."

"Not arithmetic, mother?" exclaimed Mary, starting up as she would have done if Dr. Anson had taken to explaining the "rule of three" from the pulpit.

"Yes. Is it not one of the duties of your life to understand that?"

"Yes, I am sure it is, provoking though it be."

"And how are we told in God's word to go through with life's duties? 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and *not* unto men.' You forget, when you go to the blackboard with a beating heart and trembling hands—as I know my dear little sensitive girl sometimes does—that Jesus is with you, ready to give you all needed strength for the performance of that duty just as your faith shall claim it. You have only to put out your hand and he will take it. With his approving smile like sunshine in your heart, you could bear with your teacher's impatience and your schoolmates' criticism, and that brier would cease to wound, would it not? There would be work, but not worry."

"I don't say 'Yes,' mother, because, when you have made things straight and plain, I look at them again in a little while and they are all as crooked as ever. I never get to the end of thinking, and set-

tle down and *stay put.* It's beginning, beginning, beginning, all the time. And I'm tired."

This was said not impatiently, but with a weary tone that went to the mother's heart. She meant to have gone on with a little sermon to Mary about the foolishness of her anxiety concerning her dress, knowing that, with all the difference finery could make, her little daughter appeared as well as her more showy neighbors, and that she needed only the ornament of "a meek and quiet spirit" to adorn that station in life in which God had placed her. But, hearing her sigh, she dropped all that and took up the Saviour's own strain of comfort—the balm that reaches the heart's most hidden wound:

"You are 'weary and heavy-laden,' my child; Jesus calls you to come to him and rest. You are not expecting enough of him."

Mary was silent. Her head had found its old place on her mother's shoulder, and she was thinking it all over, but with a dawning light in her soul. At last she said, as though to herself,

"Yes, I suppose that is the trouble: I do not expect enough of Jesus. I know he is my friend, and I ought to be glad of it."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WOUNDED LIEUTENANT.

"I cannot always trace the way
Where thou, almighty One, dost move;
But I can always, always say
That God is love."

A ROW of neat cottages with green blinds and pleasant piazzas stood along one of Mary's favorite paths to the shore. A wide strip of green grass railed off from the street and divided by graveled walks to every door was open to them all in the afternoon. Children were always playing in the shade of the houses, as there were very few trees that could bear the strong north-east winds of winter long enough to grow to a size to afford any great shelter from the sun.

Charlie and George, who had found some pleasant playmates there, came home one afternoon in high glee over an invitation they had received from one of them, Willie

Denton, who had asked them into his mother's cottage to see his wounded brother, a young lieutenant in the navy, at home on furlough.

"He likes boys," said Charlie, "and he told us lots of stories about the sea, and how he got hurt, and what he means to do when he gets well, and everything."

"A pretty general statement," said Mrs. Clemson to her aunt, with a smile at her son's enthusiasm. "That must be the invalid we saw lying on the lounge as we passed yesterday."

"Yes," said Charlie; "he is helped out on the piazza every day. You ought to hear him talk, mother. He is just as brave! He hardly knew when he got hurt, he was so busy fighting. The man at the helm was struck down by a big cannon-ball, and he stepped up to take his place, and another ball hit him on the knee and knocked him flat. He was up again on his elbow in a minute, and when the men came to drag him off he asked them what they wanted to take him out of the fight for. Just think of *that!*" Charlie's eyes were flashing with his admi-

ration of such courage. "That's pluck, I tell you; don't you think it was, mother?"

"Yes, indeed it was. I wonder if he has pluck all the way through? Did you not tell me yesterday that Willie said his big brother swore?"

"He didn't swear before us. He is brave, for all that," said Charlie, stoutly. "I'd like to be a sailor like Mr. Denton, and go round the world on a man-of-war."

Mrs. Clemson looked rather sober, but she did not just then tell Charlie all she thought of the bravery of swearing. It was laid up for a quiet talk with her dear boy when they should be alone together.

Mr. Denton had sent word to Mary and Kittie that he would be glad to see them the next day; he wished to show them some sketches of the wonderful countries he had visited. Willie had a great deal to tell about these pictures. There was the great volcano in the Sandwich Islands, with a river of fire running down its sides; the tall rock of Peter Botte Mountain, in Southern Africa, standing up like a spire of solid stone or a giant without any arms. In Central Amer-

ica he had been over the strange ruined cities that flourished there before the people in Europe knew that the world was round and had a great continent on the other side of it. He had sketched the pyramids of Mexico and Egypt. He could tell them how he once coasted along the wild shores of Norway till he came to the North Cape and clambered up over its rocks to look off over the lonely polar sea; how the sun went slowly down at midnight till its rim had touched the glittering waves, and then slowly climbed the heavens again without ever taking his burning eye from the world. Then he had been through the Straits of Gibraltar and chased an ostrich over the Great Desert of Sahara; had bathed in the river Jordan and gone over Sinai. In truth, he had a thousand things to tell about that Willie could not remember even in name.

Of course the children were very anxious to go; and when consent was given, the next question was how they should be entertained until it was time for the wonderful visit.

Charlie was counting the hours on his fingers.

"Nine of them must go for sleep," said Mrs. Brainard, smiling over his eager calculation—"nine hours in one solid nap, when I hope you little people will lie quietly on your pillows while your busy heads and hands and feet are getting rested for to-morrow."

The next day the children found their wounded friend lying on his sofa as usual, but much more feeble than they expected to see him. His mother, who sat by his side when they came in, tried to persuade him to leave the entertainment of his little visitors to her, as she feared he was not able to exert himself as much as he intended, but he insisted that a sight of their bright faces had already cheered him up, and he was sure he should feel better after a talk with them.

Mr. Denton was a tall, handsome young man with dark hair and eyes that seemed to read one's face at a glance. Mary thought she had never seen a kindlier smile than his when he called her to his side and bade her welcome. His hand was thin and hot, and he sometimes spoke with difficulty, owing to twinges of pain in a wound he had received in his shoulder. He had several others which

crippled him far more, but none that gave him such pain as this one, so easily affected by every change of position or movement of his arms.

The children were full of pity and admiration for him. George begged of Mrs. Denton the privilege of fanning him, and Mary quite raised the envy of the rest by a plan for arranging his pillows much more to his comfort than any he had before tried.

"What a little genius you are!" he said, thanking her. "You will spoil me amongst you. My head is quite turned already with so much attention."

"I should never have thought of piling up pillows that way," said Mary, "if I had not seen mother do it when she was taking care of one of her Sunday-school boys who was sick last winter."

"So your mother is one of the righteous, is she?" said he, turning his black eyes to look very earnestly at Mary.

There was a change in his manner which she could hardly understand, and she was thinking more of what he meant than of his question, when Mrs. Denton looked up

from her embroidery with a warning shake of the head, though she was smiling at the same time, saying,

"Harry, Harry, take care! You may be called to account for this."

"What does she mean?" thought Mary.

She was at first afraid that she herself had been doing something to make the lady laugh, but she saw differently when Mr. Denton answered with a sneer:

"Do not be anxious, mother; I shall not poison the children."

"He is a sad fellow," said Mrs. Denton, though she did not seem in the least disturbed by the thought. "He has some wild notions, but he will get sobered down here fast enough. You must tell your mother to come and see him. We have been studying into old times, and I find that your family and ours are related in some way—I can hardly tell how. Perhaps Mrs. Clemson may be able to tell me if our great-grandmothers were cousins or sisters."

Mary promised to give her mother the message, and in her interest in what followed soon forgot all her unpleasant impres-

sions. A curious table with a revolving top stood by Mr. Denton's sofa; it was covered with books, maps and pictures carefully arranged, so that by a slight movement of his hand he could easily reach any of them. He had a map now and was unrolling it, while the children gathered closer to him. Charlie had been growing impatient at more delay, but brightened up now at the prospect of a story.

"Where shall we go this afternoon?" asked Mr. Denton, looking round on his little audience. "To Europe, Asia, Africa or the islands of the Pacific where the coral-insects are building up continents and the little brown babies swim as soon as they can walk?"

"I'd like to hear about the little brown babies," said Kittie. "What are they?"

"Little savages, Miss Kittie, wide awake and all alive with fun, who dash into the breakers and come up like fishes. They play 'hide-and-seek' in the water just as you would in the woods. Sometimes a great shark comes along and gobbles up a few of them for his supper; but that is not much

matter, for if he did not they would only grow up to be great ugly cannibals and eat up one another and all the white people who came to see them. I once saw a little fellow about five years old paddling about in the surf down on the beach at Samoa. His mother was not far away, though at the time she was so busy tying up her hair that she could not watch him. I was coming from the ship in the captain's boat; and when about halfway to the shore, I saw a big shark gliding along about two oars' length from us. I thought nothing of it till the man next me yelled out as though he saw something. 'See there!' he shouted, with his eyes staring toward the spot where the shark had been heading. The little fellow had his arms up for a dive, when there was a white gleam in the water, a snap and a scream, and he was gone."

Little Kittie was sobbing outright by this time. Mrs. Denton drew her closer and took her in her arms:

"You should not tell such horrible stories, Harry; children are so easily frightened with such things.—Never mind, dear," turning to

Kittie, with a soothing tone; "you are safe enough. There are no sharks here."

Charlie and George had so many questions to ask Mr. Denton that he did not hear his mother's reproof for frightening Kittie. But the little girl wiped away her tears in a few minutes, and then broke out with a very sunshiny speech just as Mr. Denton was explaining why sharks have to turn over to seize their prey:

"You needn't mind, sir, if you did tell such a dreadful thing about that little brown boy. He went to heaven instead of growing up to eat people and worship idols and never know God."

Mr. Denton shrugged his shoulders—an old habit of his—and then put on a very wry face over the pain the movement cost him:

"I admire your charity more than your taste, Miss Kittie. Do not send too many little savages to heaven, or I shall not want to go there."

Kittie opened her blue eyes with astonishment.

"Harry!" said Mrs. Denton, who seemed

to be used to having a great deal of trouble with her tall son. "Harry! Mrs. Clemson will never let these children come here again if you talk so."

"What does he mean?" asked Kittie. "Is he not glad to have Jesus love the brown boys just as well as he does the white ones?"

Mrs. Denton kissed her and laughed:

"He is a great naughty boy, Kittie. I could never make him talk right, and now that he is so big he doesn't mind me at all."

"Mamma used to say that we must be good and then we could do good," said Kittie.

Mrs. Denton looked serious:

"Where is your mamma, Kittie?"

"She is in heaven; she went there this summer, when her white rosebush was all in bloom, but she has roses all the year round in 'happy land:' she said so to me one day. But I wear a black dress," said Kittie, laying her hand upon her skirt, "only because I have no papa and mamma *here*."

"Dear child!" sighed the lady. "No doubt they are better off. We must try to think so, at least."

"Why, I *know* it," said Kittie, earnestly and with great surprise in her tone. "Grandma reads to me about it almost every day out of the back of the Bible, and it says—" But Kittie's memory failed her among all the beautiful pictures there. "It says so much about the place where papa and mamma have gone that I think it's the best story of all."

Kittie was full of talk as she walked home with Mary that afternoon. She was quite concerned about Mr. Denton, but found it rather difficult to make Mary understand just how she felt toward him:

"Don't you think that he is real good, Mary?"

"I don't know whether to like him or not," was her reply.

"I only wish he would get well. I am so sorry for him!"

"So am I, Kittie. But if he dies, what then? That's the question, you see."

"But he doesn't seem to be *real wicked*,

Mary. He wouldn't be so kind to us if he was."

"He may like us, but I am afraid he isn't a friend to Jesus. He said ever so many things to make me think so."

Kittie was troubled over this.

"I know," she said, "that he talked very queer about those little brown babies, and he was very particular about their not going to heaven with him; but he didn't say anything about Jesus when I heard him."

"I know that," said Mary, decidedly, "but he laughs about God's book, and he would never do that if he loved God's Son. Then he is not pleased when Christians want the poor heathen to go to heaven; and you know that our Saviour's last words were about that. Mother says that when people die their friends pay great attention to their last words, and I am sure Jesus meant that we should help as many to heaven as we could; so I suppose we ought to attend to the heathen the first thing. I wish mother would go and talk to him."

Kittie quite agreed with her cousin about this.

"Grandma or auntie could tell him what is right, and then he would feel different. I don't think he is real good, either, when I remember all he said."

So the children chatted away until they came to the long piazza of the hotel. The groups of ladies and gentlemen who had been sitting about enjoying the cool sea-breeze were now dispersing to go in-doors, as the wind, that had been easterly all day, was now fast rising. The sky was clouding over, and there was every prospect of a storm before morning.

Charlie and George, who had been too impatient to wait for the slower motions of their sisters, now came rushing to meet them, while Mr. Adair, a gentleman who had been a great friend to the children during their short acquaintance with him, was waiting to ask them one of those pleasant questions they had learned to like so well to answer:

"Who is ready for a walk to the beach with me this evening? I think there will be something down there worth looking at."

"I! I! I!" they all shouted.

"Have you any objections to my carrying

the young folks off, ladies?" asked he, turning to Mrs. Brainard and Mrs. Clemson, who were close by.

"Not in the least, if you are willing to have the trouble of their company."

Mr. Adair soon had them all about him, and they set off gayly. As they came near the shore the thunder of the breakers was almost deafening. They came roaring and tumbling up the beach, tossing their white caps high in the air, and then rolled sullenly back as if for a more furious plunge.

The shore-line was marked by a high bluff, broken down here and there by the fury of the sea, which year after year was gnawing it away. Beyond it a smooth sandy floor sloped away to the water, making a safe and delightful bathing-place for the multitude of people who had gathered at the different hotels. Mr. Adair did not think it best to venture beyond the bluff that night, though there were several places where it was notched back so deeply as to leave a broad space which the waves did not reach. But he knew that, safe as they might then be down there, the rising tide

would very soon roll over the shore-path leading to these little coves and cut off retreat, unless one could climb up the very face of the cliff.

"I do not believe I should have thought of any danger if I had been alone," said Charlie. "George and I were coming down here on our way from Mrs. Denton's, but we happened to think that it might be nearer our supper-time than we supposed, and so we ran home first."

They stood holding on their hats, for the wind was blowing a gale, and, between that and the roar of the breakers, they could scarcely hear one another's voices.

"I came down with you on purpose," said Mr. Adair. "When I have once explained to you the danger of these shores and what to do in case of accidents, I think you will never forget it. You little folks ought every day to be learning something that will be of use in after-years. But hark! What noise is that?"

He stepped to the edge of the bluff and looked over, motioning to the children to remain standing in the lee of one of the

little arbors put up there for the comfort of visitors. He was gone but an instant, when he threw himself flat on the ground and reached over as far as he could, as if he were grasping something. Mary had much ado to hold the boys back; but, as they had promised to obey Mr. Adair's orders, they yielded to her persuasions.

They soon saw a reason for Mr. Adair's strange motions. He raised himself carefully up, lest the earth should crumble away under him, and they saw that he held a hand in his. A head belonging to it then came in sight—the curly head of a little boy. It was that of Willie Denton. Mr. Adair was dragging him up. He had been caught in one of the little coves by the hungry waves, and could escape only by scrambling up the face of the bluff, sometimes digging with hands and feet for a hold upon it.

Willie was borne home in great triumph, the children following to tell Mrs. Denton exactly how it all happened, which they did in such a hubbub of voices that she never got the exact facts of the story, after all, but

fell to kissing her little hero without knowing much save this—that he had been in great danger, but was again safe in her arms.

CHAPTER IX.

LITTLE WILLIE DENTON.

"There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers."

ALTHOUGH a very delicate child, Willie, after he came home, did not seem to be the worse for his exposure to danger. He had been much overheated by a long run on the beach, and then was drenched by the spray and exposed to the cold blast of the north-easter as he clung to the cliff and on his way home. He was able, however, to tell his story to his brother Harry and the other friends who gathered around him, with all the flourishes necessary to impress his hearers with a due sense of his bravery. But that night he was feverish and oppressed for breath, and so much excited that his mother thought it best to send for a physician early in the morning.

When Mrs. Clemson called she was surprised to find the little fellow in great suffering, tossing about on his couch as though he could find no comfortable place on which to pillow his weary head. His mind seemed constantly to be wandering back to the danger through which he had passed the night before. Sometimes in his troubled dreams he was climbing up the crumbling sides of the bank, and then he had fallen and was battling for life with the angry waves. His hands would be raised in terror, as though the breakers were thundering down toward him, and his mother, who sat anxiously by, would clasp them in hers and, bending over him, whisper in his ear tender and soothing words which woke him with a cry of joy at finding himself safe at home. Then he would call for his little friends, and seemed so pacified and diverted when Mary came in with her mother to see him that Mrs. Denton thought it best to let her stay a while with him.

Charlie and George had been at his door more than once that day, but they were not allowed to see him, for fear of causing over-

excitement. Mary had quite a gift at telling stories, and often amused Charlie with the treasures laid up in her storehouse of memory. Willie knew this, and put in his plea for a story as soon as she sat down by his side.

"Do think of something, Mary," said Mrs. Denton, wearily. "My mind has been on the stretch all day to keep his thoughts in a right direction. Nothing exciting, however; some humdrum talk, if that is possible for such a bright little body as you are."

So Mary sat down where Willie could look right into her eyes, and began to think what she should tell him. She had a long list of Charlie's favorite stories from which to choose, but they were all suited to a hearty, wide-awake boy who wanted to hear about bears and lions and shipwrecks, and needed to listen to the relations of fearful adventures of all kinds to appease his appetite. But nothing like this would do here.

"Haven't you 'most thought of something?" asked Willie, after his little stock of patience had been suddenly exhausted.

"Suppose," said Mary, "we do as mother

does when she is tired sometimes or cannot think of the right kind of a story? She says, 'Let us have a talk;' and we always find it as good as a story."

"I don't want to talk," said Willie. "But then you may."

"I was thinking, Willie, of something we talked over the other night. Charlie had been asking how the world looked when it was all new. It must have been very, very beautiful and perfect, for we are told that God thought so; and we may be sure he knows, for he is used to heaven."

"Where did you find that?" asked Willie, eagerly.

"In the Bible. But you must lie still, Willie, or I cannot talk to you at all. Let me smooth your hair—so!"

The little nurse was very happy over the thought that here, at last, was somebody who needed such teaching and care as she could give.

"Yes, Willie," she continued, "the Bible tells us that God saw all that he had made; and, 'behold, it was very good.' That was ever so long ago—before there was a single

farm or city or railroad or steamboat or newspaper."

"How did they travel? What did they do?"

"Where would they want to go, Willie? Adam and Eve had all the world to themselves when the earth was just made, and that is the time we are talking about, you remember. They had nobody to go and see, and all the news they had about other thinking creatures must have come from heaven. They had a beautiful garden to live in; God had planted it for them. It was not like ours, I suppose, with paths and fences and flower-beds. There wasn't anybody's work in it but God's when Adam went there."

"'Went there'!" exclaimed Willie. "He was born there."

"So I thought till mother showed me where it says that God 'put the man which he had made into the garden.' He was alone in it for a while with the animals before Eve was made. But he could talk before he had a human being to speak to, for he named the creatures as they came to him. Perhaps God and the holy angels

often came to be company for him; for, as mother says, he did not seem at all surprised when he heard the voice of his heavenly Father moving among the trees in the cool of the day, and I think he would have been if he had never had a visit from him before."

"Wasn't he afraid?" asked Willie.

"Not until he had done what he knew was wrong; then he hid himself."

"There's one thing I'd like to know about," said Willie: "how do you suppose he managed if a big tiger and a little lamb came up together to get named?"

"I don't know, I am sure. I often think of such things—that is, I used to more than I do now; but then I remember everything must have been so different when the world was good and happy that we cannot imagine those days very well. There is one thing we may be sure of, and that is that sin made all the trouble that ever came into the world. Adam and Eve had very pleasant work to do. They gathered fruit and took care of the garden, because it says they were put there 'to dress it and to keep it.'

"All this," said Mary, with her mother's lesson fresh in her mind, "was when the world was new. But some day it will be worn out and pass away; then God will make a new world, more beautiful than ever this was, and there will be a new sky overhead and a different light shining down over all. God will plant another garden for his children to walk in. There will be a wonderful river flowing through it, and trees along its banks. The spring and the sunshine will never fade in that happy land. Little children will be there from every nation under heaven, and that will make the new garden far pleasanter than the old one ever was; for no children lived in that. Poor Adam and Eve were turned out of it before their first baby came. Satan will never come into this beautiful garden, and none of his friends can ever find their way there. Nobody will be sick or die in that country, or have any trouble. The poor people who were hungry and thirsty and tired in this world will all be satisfied if they get there.

"We hear, too, about a great city in that

land, with walls of precious stones, and gates of pearl, and all its streets of shining gold. But, best of all, Willie, Jesus—our best Friend—will be there. He said just before he died that he was going home to his Father's house to make this happy land ready for his friends, and after a few years he came back and opened a door in heaven to show John, his beloved disciple, what he had been doing and how our bright home will look. He told John to be sure and tell us all about it, and how welcome we are all to come and live there and be with him for ever."

Here Mary stopped to ask Willie if he was tired, for he lay so quietly, with his eyes closed, that she feared she had wearied him or that he had fallen asleep.

But he was awake and listening with all his heart. The dear little boy had never in his life heard such a story as this. He had heard of God and heaven, but they seemed to be subjects that were far beyond his childish thoughts; and, now that Mary's voice and words were bringing them so near, it was like a beautiful dream to him.

"Go on, please," he whispered; "I like

to hear you. What made God do all this for us? I didn't know he was like that."

"He loves us, Willie—he loves us. There isn't anybody who cares so much for us as he does. That is the reason he let Jesus come down to bring us back when we went so far away from him."

"I would like to see that beautiful country, wouldn't you, Mary?"

"Yes," she answered. "We all have an invitation there; Jesus says '*whosoever will* may come.'"

Here the doctor came in to see his little patient, and Mary rose to go. Willie held her hand.

"Come again," he said. "I like to hear you talk."

"Yes, Mary," added his mother; "come and see him to-morrow. He will be better, I hope, but he will need your cheerful company."

But the next morning Willie was no better. The children went over very early to inquire about him, and came back with very sober faces. Mr. Adair had watched with him all night, and met them at the door as

he was coming to ask Mrs. Clemson to take his place in the sick-room. They all walked back to the hotel together.

It was a bright, breezy morning after the gale of the day before, and everything was full of life and gayety. The long piazza was all astir. Ladies chatted and laughed together as they walked up and down with fresh morning-dresses fluttering in the breeze; gentlemen were reading the papers which had just arrived from the city, and discussing the news they brought.

As they passed along through the groups of people to reach the great hall-door two or three persons stopped Mr. Adair to ask about Willie Denton. There was a buzz of excitement and regret as the news went round that he was lying very near to death. A few questions from one and another about his symptoms and the doctor's opinion of the case, a few words of sorrow, and then they all forgot it—or, at least, they seemed to do so.

"I do not believe," said Mary as she walked along with her mother toward Mrs. Denton's cottage, "that anybody here would

care if we all were to die and be buried to-morrow. Those people in the parlor hardly lost the smiles from their faces when I told them how very sick Willie is."

"We cannot expect them to feel as you do, of course, my dear."

"But they don't feel at all."

"We cannot be sure of that, Mary; there is only One who can read hearts. But I do not wonder that you are surprised and pained at what seems so like indifference."

"I thought," said Mary, "that Miss Blake would want to hear about him; so I hunted her up to tell her. She always made such a pet of Willie. But she only said, 'It is too bad! He is such a handsome little fellow, and dances so well!' Then she turned her head to speak of it to the ladies who were sitting by; and she happened to see Mr. Stevens—that queer young man who made us all laugh so the other night at charades. He had on one of his wry faces, and that made her forget what she was going to say. 'Come along, Miss Ingersoll,' she said; 'let us hear what he is saying now;' and they all got up and went toward him, as though

there was nothing but fun to think about. I cannot see how she could do so, after all the great friendship she professed for Willie."

"It is strange," said Mrs. Clemson. "Of course she was not a real friend; but the glittering counterfeit she assumed is just what we might expect from a person who lives merely for present excitement. You remember how pleasant such a butterfly life as hers seemed to you not long ago? You can see now to what selfishness it leads. While Willie could laugh and dance, she smiled on him; but when he lies under the hand of death like a little drooping flower, she is willing—indeed, she prefers—to hasten along upon her thoughtless way and forget him."

Mrs. Clemson found her friends overcome with grief and mourning as those who have no hope. Not one of this gay and fashionable family had cared to listen to their Saviour's voice in their days of health and prosperity, and now in sorrow they seemed to have no thought or understanding of the consolation he could give.

Mr. Harry Denton was much more composed than his mother, and could tell Mrs. Clemson what to do for the little sufferer's comfort.

"It is very kind in you to come," he said as she took his hand. "Mother is completely discouraged and needs some one to lean upon."

"How do you feel about the case yourself, Mr. Denton?"

"Oh, I think he is going, without much doubt; the doctor tells me there is little, if any, hope. But we do not tell mother that; she could not bear it."

"And yet," thought Mrs. Clemson, "how soon this burden of sorrow may be laid upon her shrinking heart! Alas for her if she has no hope for help or strength from above!"

There were other gentlemen in the room; and so, with a few directions which Mr. Denton had to give, Mrs. Clemson went up to little Willie's room.

"Let me sit outside the door," said Mary. "I cannot bear to go away, and I won't be of the least trouble to anybody."

Mrs. Clemson thought a moment, and then consented.

"I may need you," she said; "and you can wait a little while, anyhow."

They could hear the little fellow's moans, and sometimes his broken words as he called out in his delirium.

"Do you think," asked Mary, "that he will go to heaven if he dies?"

"We will pray that God will prepare him for that happy home, my daughter, and that he will take him there."

"I have done that," said Mary, with a voice almost choked with tears, "and you know he has promised to do what we ask him."

"Yes; Jesus can reach him even in this shadow of death. May he take the little lamb to his bosom!" said Mrs. Clemson.

Mary remembered her talk with Willie only the evening before. How he seemed to drink in her words as she spoke to him of the better land! She tried to recall what she had said to him about Jesus, but could remember only that she had mentioned his name and that the little boy

was glad to hear her. Then she thought of her mother's text about the Holy Spirit, and of how Jesus himself had promised that this blessed Comforter should teach us all things.

"He can tell Willie more than I can, and bring back to his mind all he has ever heard about God. Oh that I knew he had! I will pray to him now to do it;" and, bowing her head on the table beside her, she went again to the throne of grace to ask that Christ's promise might be there fulfilled to her little friend.

People were passing in and out of the sick-room; friends from a distance arrived; but all that went on around her could not hinder her from going in that solemn hour of need to her strong and loving Saviour. How the child's faith rested in him! How well it is that he is so near to us all! We have no long pilgrimage to make to distant lands, or any temple to seek or lamb to sacrifice, before we can find Jesus. Even when we have grieved him by waiting till danger is upon us to ask his aid, we find him at our side, ready to come with a blessing.

The hour that Mary spent outside of Willie's door seemed very long. At last, as the day wore on past noon, she heard a sudden stir in the room. The door was opened and a lady came out, leading Mrs. Denton, who was weeping bitterly, across the hall.

"It is hard! It is hard!" she sobbed. "I cannot bear it!"

Mary could now look into the room they had left. Her mother was in sight, leaning over the little couch. As she stepped aside a moment she saw Willie's face lying white and still on the pillow. She ventured in, and Mrs. Clemson, seeing her, took her by the hand and led her to the bedside.

Willie seemed to be in a sweet sleep. The fresh sea-breeze was drifting in at the open window and playing with his soft brown curls. The little sunburnt hand lay just where Mary had dropped it the night before. Mrs. Clemson took it in hers and folded it across his breast with its mate. Their work was done.

"Oh, mother," sobbed Mary as they stood together in the deserted room, "I am glad I told him about Jesus last night. But if

I had known—if I had *only* known—he was going to die so soon!"

"We must leave it all now, my darling. If we do our duty hour by hour as it lies before us, Jesus will take care of the rest for us. And there is one thing we may be sure of: whatever we may do or leave undone, we know that he will do *his* part and that he loves the lambs. We can leave dear little Willie with him."

"How strange it is to think how far away his soul may now be from us! Yet he looks as though he might wake and tell us that he remembered what I told him about Jesus and heaven."

"Yes, Mary; it is difficult to realize that he is gone, and that this is only Willie's empty house we are caring for now. Its doors and windows are all shut and sealed, and its little owner has gone on a long, long journey."

"Oh how I would like to speak to him now, mother! He could tell me so much more than I told him last night. If he could only send back a letter!"

"God knows what is best for us in all

these things, Mary. Our chief concern must be to know and to do his will. Part of our duty is to work for him, and part to wait for him; one is as important as the other. If you spoke for Jesus last night, you must wait now until he shall give you his own blessed reward."

"It is not wrong to want to know what good we have done, is it?" asked Mary.

"No, indeed! But I have found that those who love Jesus most trust him most patiently and wait most joyfully till his time shall come. We do not think of payment when we work for dear friends, do we?"

"Oh no," said Mary, thoughtfully. "But it did not strike me that way before."

CHAPTER X.

AN EFFORT TO DO GOOD.

"Yet thanks to Thee that ever
Thou comest at our will;
Thy voice is heard the clearer
When all the house is still."

IT was a breezy summer morning. The sun looked as peacefully down on the soft ripples of the sea as though neither had ever known a cloud or a storm. Here and there on its broad bosom ships were spreading their sails to catch the wind and were gliding swiftly before it.

A great steamboat came puffing and blowing up to the crowded pier to take on the passengers waiting there for it. Among them was the sad procession that was carrying little Willie to his grave. The children had come thus far with their playmate on his last journey, and now, standing back on the shore, away from the crowd, were wait-

ing till the last carriage took its place on the steamboat; then the men cast off the ropes and let her glide away once more.

No death had ever come so near to Mary and Charlie as this; for when their father was called to the better country they were too young to remember much about him, and since then the years had gone by without any other loss. It was making a deep impression on their hearts especially, though all the children felt that a strange break had been made in their thoughts and their plans. They hardly knew what to do with themselves as the steamboat faded away in the distance. They lingered on the pier until Mr. Adair was ready to return, and then very quietly took their places in the carriage with him and drove back to the hotel.

"I wish mother hadn't gone with the funeral people," said Charlie, strolling listlessly into the room where he usually found her when at home. "I don't like to have her stay away such a long, long time as till to-morrow. She always has the most beautiful plans to amuse us when we get dull

and can't think what to do next. I wish she was here."

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Brainard, without lifting her eyes from the paper till she had finished the sentence she was writing. "Has our cheerful Charlie a complaint to make?"

"Not exactly, but—"

"Something like it," replied Aunt Julia, who saw that the little boy found it difficult to make a clear statement of the case.

She began to put up her pen and writing-materials, as though she knew by experience —as she did—what would have to come if she was to have any pleasanter time—that morning, at least.

"Charlie was wishing for mother," said Mary.

"Ah! That is not strange. Boys, and girls too, have had a way of doing that ever since— Well, ever since the first little people came into the world."

"The first boy would have had a lonesome time of it if his father and mother had left him," said Charlie, brightening up a little. "I don't think I should like to

live anywhere, even in Eden, unless mother was there too."

"Perhaps not," said Mrs. Brainard, smiling.

"Don't you forget, grandma?" exclaimed Kittie, eagerly. "Charlie might have been happy there with God and the holy angels for company, 'cause my little brother, who loved mamma so very, very dearly, spent five years in heaven with them and never saw her at all till this summer-time."

"You are right, my darling; those who truly love God are always happy with him. He gives a joy that no trouble can ever take from us. And if Charlie had been born in Eden in its sinless days, and his heavenly Father had called his mother to leave him a while and come and sing before the throne, I have no doubt that he would have been so sure that God knew best about it that he would have given her up and said, as Jesus did, 'Not my will, but thine, be done.'"

"But I wasn't born in Eden, Aunt Julia, and so it's entirely different. I have to feel bad when mother goes away; and I wish

there were no funerals, and that I did not get into puzzles and scrapes, and all that."

"I know what you mean, Charlie," said his aunt: "you think sorrow has got into the world and we have to make the best of it, and that your mother has found out how to do that."

"That's so," said Charlie. "She's the best woman in this world."

"That point being settled," answered Mrs. Brainard, laughing, "we will not argue about it, but will try to do as she would like to have us if she were here. What shall it be?"

"Oh dear! I don't know," sighed Charlie. "I only wish I did!"

Kittie brought out her box of jack-straws and emptied them on the table in tempting confusion; but after two or three attempts to get out a piece without shaking the rest, they were tossed back into the box again. Charlie could not forget who last played jack-straws with him, for there, scored on a card, was little Willie's record in his own boyish hand.

Mrs. Brainard saw that she had better

come to the rescue again; so she proposed to read them a little story.

"But we must do something, grandma," said George; "don't you think so? We are not big like you, and can't be happy by thinking of things."

"I know that, my little man. I was about asking if any one had a plan to propose. Mary is in a brown-study; perhaps she will come out with something after a while."

"I suppose you mean for us to try and do good to somebody?" said Mary.

"Yes; that is one way, and the surest way to bring happiness to our own hearts."

"I don't know of anybody about here who needs help, grandma," said George. "I made a beautiful canoe yesterday for that little Spanish boy, and I thought he could play with it in the wash-bowl when his mother keeps him in her room so long; but the next thing I knew it was tossed out of the window as though it had been a chip. There's no use trying to help some people along; they don't care for anything."

"It was not all in vain, Georgie," said

his grandmother: "there was the pleasure you had in doing it, for one thing."

"Yes," added Kittie; "and there was what his poor tired nurse said when you came to the door with it."

All the children laughed at this.

"Why, you couldn't understand a word she said, Kittie," said Mary.

"But she bowed and smiled and seemed so pleased."

"That was thanks enough, I am sure, children. But we must not always do good for the thanks we get; that is not forgetting ourselves or following Jesus. We are told that he cleansed ten lepers one day, and that nine of them went away without thanking him."

"I'm sure I'd do something if I only knew how," said Charlie. "But people won't let you do things when you want to. I'd show those children in the next room how to play without getting into snarls all the time if their mother would let them go with us. But she is so afraid of their ribbons and things!"

"I do not mean to propose any needless

burden, children," said Mrs. Brainard; "I only want you to do good as you have opportunity. We are not to wait till we have some great thing to do, for, as your sweet hymn says,

"'Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make this earth an Eden
Like the heaven above.'"

Mrs. Brainard was folding up and directing her letters while she talked on, and now they were ready and lay in a neat little pile on the top of her desk.

"Did not I hear somebody say just now that he would like to do a kindness if he knew how?"

"It was me," exclaimed a voice from the window where both boys were leaning over the sill.

"Whichever of you it was," said Mrs. Brainard, "I would advise him to draw in his head and look about him a little to see if there is not an opportunity under his feet now—something to leave undone, at least, and perhaps something to do."

There were two more pairs of eager eyes searching the room upon this.

"Oh, I see!" said George, springing forward as his eye fell on Mrs. Brainard's desk. "Here are grandma's letters to be taken to the post-office."

"And her paper to get," added Charlie. "What was it we were to leave undone?"

"Look at that pretty fresh paper on Mr. Nesbit's wall." Mr. Nesbit was the hotel-keeper. "Idle feet have been making a sad impression under that window. That is always the way with dreamers: they are apt to forget the good that lies nearest."

The boys had Mrs. Brainard's letters, and were already halfway down stairs with them before Mary discovered that they were going without her.

"Come on," said Kittie, skipping back. "We're in such a hurry!"

"You can take the letters without me this time, Kittie; I think, after all, I'll go and see Mr. Denton. Mother said I might, but I couldn't make up my mind."

"It was your mother's plan that you should all go, wasn't it?" asked Mrs. Brain-

ard as Kittie went racing off through the hall.

"Yes, ma'am, but Kittie wouldn't go; and the boys made all sorts of excuses to get out of it, too, though Mr. Denton asked them this morning to come and stay with him a while. His man is so stupid, he says, and he likes to have children about him. I do think they might have tried to please him, when he is so kind to us."

"I think I can persuade them," said Mrs. Brainard. "I would go myself if he had not shown so marked a preference for your society. Perhaps," she continued, as though the thought had just come to her, "God may use the voice of a little child to lead this proud unbeliever into his kingdom. He often does."

Mary looked very sober, but said nothing. It was the very thought which had been in her mind ever since Mr. Denton had given her that first searching look.

Henry Denton was now the only child left to his widowed mother. Since the death of her husband, ten years before, she had been three times to the little village church-

yard where he was buried to lay her children, one after another, down by his side. Her journey that morning was the saddest one of all, for her earthly treasures were lessening very fast, and she could not feel, as God's children do, that by these afflictions he was preparing her for a better and more enduring inheritance.

Willie was a bright, manly little fellow, and had promised better for a long life than any of her family. Yet, as if to give her a deeper lesson on the uncertainty of all mere earthly hopes than she had ever before learned, he had been stricken down most suddenly of all. It was like a painful dream to her, and she could not realize the truth until she came to look on his fair young face as he lay ready for the grave. Then it was sad to see her hopeless and helpless agony as she bade him farewell, as though the joyous spirit so much a part of her own life was imprisoned in that senseless clay, and must soon be for ever buried from her sight where no sunshine could reach him; and no promise of a glorious resurrection from the dead remained for her.

Her eldest child, Harry, now her only prop, was a helpless invalid too feeble to bear the exciting scenes around him without great suffering of mind and of body. It was a relief to him that day when all had gone and the house was quiet. Several friends had insisted on remaining with him, but he refused all such aid, declaring that sleep was all he wanted, and that would come if he could be alone.

But as the hours went on, and "kind Nature's sweet restorer" would not come, the silence became oppressive. Books and papers might have diverted his thoughts, but his eyes could bear the strain of reading only a few moments at a time, and he had no patience with the efforts made by his well-meaning but blundering attendant to supply their lack of service. So, when Mary came in, Bryan was excused for a while and sent to do something for which he had more genius than for reading.

"You are as welcome as are flowers in May," said Mr. Denton, reaching his hand to grasp hers. "Where are the rest of you? Ah! I know," he added, seeing Mary was hesi-

tating for an excuse: "it is too bright outside to stay in-doors unless one is tied down as I am. But I am thankful that any one is willing to come to such dismal quarters to cheer me up."

"I'll read to you," said Mary, taking up a paper, "or do anything I can to amuse you."

"Here," he said, "is a long letter from Japan with news from our squadron. You might find something in that."

"I'll read it all, Mr. Denton; I am sure you must want to hear about your ship."

"Yes," said he, rather listlessly; "I want to hear, and I do not want to. When a fellow is fairly knocked up, as I am, it is not inspiriting to hear what is going on outside. Everything but me is astir and pushing on. Heigh-ho! I cannot even yawn without paying for the privilege with a groan. But do not look so sorrowful over it," he added, laughing. "That is the way the world moves round: one half's up, while the other goes down."

"I think," said Mary as she glanced over the letter, "there is somebody sick besides

you. It says Lieutenant Fane was left at Nagasaki with a fever."

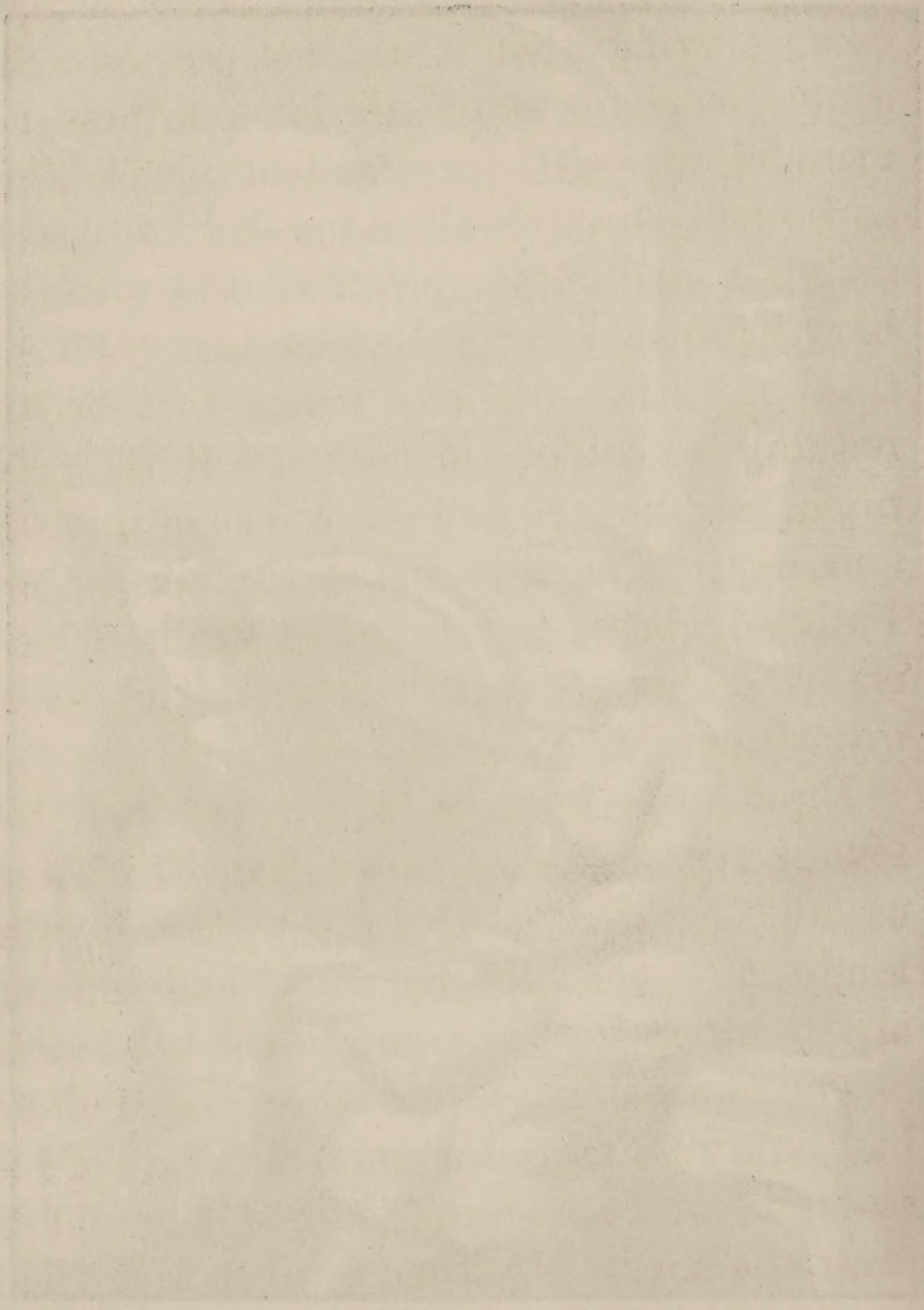
"Fane? Poor fellow! Well, old Charon had booked him, anyhow. He was a hard drinker, and will not be likely to get through. I am sorry to hear it, though, for my misery does not want company. Look on farther; perhaps you can find something more cheerful."

"Yes," said Mary; "here's something. The commodore has been attending a grand dinner-party in the city;" and with a very animated voice she read of the banners and music and speeches, thinking that here, at last, was something the poor invalid could bear to hear. But she was mistaken; he was listening only to please her, and would have tossed the paper away if he could.

"Do not trouble yourself," he said at last. "I am hard to please with newspaper chat; it sets me to thinking too much. Tell me about yourself, Miss Mary. What do you think about, little puss? Something fresh and cheery, no doubt."

But she looked grave enough then, though she tried to smile in return. Child as she

The Invalid Officer. Page 145.



was, she could feel that here was a famishing heart craving what it did not possess. She could not understand all its weariness nor measure its pain, for she had never been, as he had, through all the round of earthly ambition and pleasure to find them vanity, but she knew from the weary look that settled on his face when in repose that he had nothing to which to look forward. Yet might he not even now come to himself and say, "There is bread enough in my Father's house, and to spare, while I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my Father"?

Bryan was now called in to draw the lounge through the low French window out on the piazza, where the poor invalid might have more of the fresh and bracing air for which he had come to the sea-beach.

The unusual excitement through which he had been passing or the gradual failure of his strength, or both together, had wrought a great change in Mr. Denton since Mary had last seen him out of doors.

"This bright sunshine makes a sad picture of me," said he as she was arranging his pil-

lows. "But never mind," he added, lightly; "it won't be so always."

"I think, sir," said Bryan, "if I may make bold to say it, that you would be the better of an hour's sleep after you have had your broth."

"Can't do it, Bryan. I wish I could." His eyes closed wearily, and he turned away as though he was tired of all the world. "You may go, Bryan; I want nothing so much as to be let alone."

Mary scarcely knew whether to go or to stay, but sat with quite an anxious look for so young a face till Mr. Denton spoke.

"Do not mind anything I say to Bryan," he said when the man had left; "I am always cross with him. He is continually looking at me as though I had lost my senses and he was contriving how to fill up the gap with his."

"He would hardly be able to do that, sir," said Mary, quite reassured by his returning cheerfulness. "I think he is very sorry for you and does not know how to show it."

"I suppose so," was the reply; "he is one

of the kindest-hearted creatures in the world. Mother says she heard him praying for me up in his room the other day;" and Mr. Denton was very much amused at the thought.

"Do you think that is so strange?" asked Mary, shocked at his levity, but too much roused by it any longer to shrink from speaking to him.

"It is not strange for *him* to do it, of course—it is just like him; but it is a great waste of time and feeling, if he did but know it. However, every one to his notion."

"I pray for you too, Mr. Denton," said Mary, with a voice trembling with emotion. "I pray to God every day that he may open your eyes to see and to know the kind Saviour."

Mr. Denton looked at her a moment in mute but respectful surprise. Little did he know the depth of feeling which prompted her words or what a struggle had gone before them. A cold smile lighted up his face as he spoke:

"Thank you, Miss Mary. You are a lit-

tle saint, I know; and if there is anything in prayer, yours may do me good. But I doubt it."

"I know you do," she answered. "You don't see the truth at all, because you don't look the right way."

"How do you know that?" he asked, soberly. "I have read the Bible in the course of my life as much as you have, it is likely, and I have studied the opinions of great and wise men about it; and yet I do not see in its words what you and your good mother do. But I shall not quarrel with you about it," he said, very pleasantly, "for that would be foolish indeed. I do not want to lose a dear little friend like you for the sake of an idle notion."

"Oh, Mr. Denton," she exclaimed, "we have no right to have any idle notions about God. We must listen carefully to his words and follow right on to obey them, so as to be ready to answer when he calls us to account."

"I *have* heard, my little preacher, and yet here I am, a grief and a distress of mind to you. How is that?" he asked, with a smile

that showed very plainly that, beyond the amusement her earnestness afforded him, he cared nothing for her words.

"You have not heard with your heart, Mr. Denton: that makes all the difference in finding out about God."

"You must explain yourself, Miss Mary, if you want a poor sinner like me to understand you. That is the way missionaries do, is it not?"

There was a sneer in his words which chilled Mary to the heart. She had never felt her ignorance and weakness as she did now with the proud man before her, so satisfied with himself and so blind to his great danger. For a moment she was discouraged about any effort she had made or ever could make to warn him. She felt that he already considered her presuming, and she was half inclined to think she had been. Should she go on and answer him, or not? And then the thought came rushing into her mind that he might be as near to death as Willie was when she spoke to him of Jesus, and she remembered she had been asking for an opportunity. Here it was, and Mr. Denton

himself had opened the way. No; she would not draw back for the sake of her own feelings. Jesus asks only a heart given up to him, and he can put in it a power of his own which can move mountains of sin and ignorance and trouble.

The wisdom and power of faith came to Mary when she looked away from herself to Jesus in this hour of need :

"I would not speak to you, sir, about anything else in this way, because you know so much more than I do; but there are things that nobody can find out unless he goes to God to learn. He is just as willing to tell little children as he is to tell grown people; so he showed me when I asked him, and he'll show you. Won't you ask him to teach you, Mr. Denton? You can't study it out for yourself; for if it took study to make Christians, little children could never find the way."

Mr. Denton heard her through, as though he meant to be as kind to her as possible.

"I have no doubt," he replied, "that you are very sincere, my little friend, and enjoy your notions very much, but you must allow

me to have mine; and if I choose to take a more cheerful view of such things than you do, you cannot blame me. I have a dull time of it at best. Will you call Bryan? I think I shall have to go in now."

CHAPTER XI.

MR. DENTON'S PARTY.

"Lord, give me patience to abide
The unknown workings of thy will."

WITH all the pain he was constantly suffering, Mr. Denton had not until then parted from Mary without a smile and a cordial invitation to come again. He was very weak now, it is true, after an almost sleepless night and the excitement of the morning, and could not be expected to waste many words on any subject; but Mary, always so sensitive to the opinion of others, was very much troubled about this omission. She was sure, as she thought the visit over on her walk home, that she had offended Mr. Denton, and that he would never want to see her again.

Was this the way she was called to work for Jesus, or had she made a mistake? She

had not counted upon this loss—upon any loss, in fact. In the prayer she had offered up to Jesus for work in his vineyard, she had not thought of anything but *success*, and there never had been a time, even when she was so dazzled by a life of luxury and ease as to despise her humble tasks at home, when the thought of that was not very pleasant to her and more of an object (though she did not suspect it) than the glory of God. Still, it was humble faith in Jesus which had helped her through her conversation with Mr. Denton. But her Saviour loved her too well to leave her to choose her own work or her own way in this world; so he led her into a path where she would see what it was to glorify him rather than herself.

It was bathing-hour when she reached the hotel, and her friends were down on the beach. Mrs. Brainard had left word that if Mary came back in time she was to follow them there. But Mary had no heart to-day for her usual frolic in the surf, and chose to wander about the empty rooms in a very disconsolate way until the others

came back. Her patience was not very much to be relied on at best, and it was not very long before it gave out in so dull an atmosphere as that. If she could have had a place in which to hide away entirely, she would have cried. But Charlie would come racing after her with his questions, and so that was impossible. There seemed to be nothing for her but to swallow her grief and chagrin, and to put the best face on the matter; for, strange to say, after the "line upon line" she knew of God's word, she forgot in that time of need to tell her Father in heaven anything about her trouble.

The children came home with very happy faces:

"We have had a splendid time! Why didn't you come down, Mary?"

"I was tired; besides, it was late, and I thought you would all be ready to come out of the water before I was ready to go in."

All this was a good enough excuse, and true as far as it went; for the little face that Mrs. Brainard took between her hands to kiss looked weary enough to tell its own story without words.

"Tired of what, dear?" asked her aunt.

"People can't always tell *why* they are tired, can they, Aunt Julia?"

"Certainly not; but aunties like me are very apt to look into such matters, you know, especially when mothers are away. But I have not yet asked you how you found Mr. Denton."

"Very weak indeed," was the low reply.

"Too feeble to see you all if you were to go? I have persuaded the children, on our way up from the beach, to go with you to see him this afternoon."

Mary was so quiet over this proposal that her aunt wondered; but she said nothing, thinking that the trouble in her little niece's heart would either wear away before it was time to go or else find a better explanation than she seemed ready to give now.

But when the hour came for the visit, the children were very much astonished over Mary's quiet announcement that she was not going.

"Oh yes, you are," said Kittie, coaxingly. "We can't go without you."

"I mean just what I say; so please don't

say anything more about it," answered Mary, firmly.

Charlie whistled very loudly and provokingly upon this, and George, who was always stirred up with the least of Charlie's jokes, set in with a laugh; all of which, with what had gone before, was too much for poor Mary, who ran off to her mother's room to get away from them all and to hide the tears which had so long been pent up.

Kittie would have followed her with inquiry and comfort, but her grandmother held her back:

"Let her alone, dear; we all like to be left alone sometimes. And I think you had better go without Mary this afternoon."

After a little more ado, they were off; but Mrs. Brainard had scarcely settled herself to the letter-writing so broken in upon by the events of the day when there came a tap at the door. It was Bryan, sent to inquire if the children could stay to tea with Mr. Denton.

"It do cheer him up amazin' to have them around," said he, "begging pardon" with many bows for the liberty of speech he was

taking. "Miss Mary, now, this morning: she read the paper to him far better nor I could, and she such a slip of a girl and he so partickler—leastways, he is with me. But I don't complain, ma'am; he is a sufferin' man, and I've set my mind on doing what I can for him while he is in this world."

"You never forget, I hope, that he is on his way to another world?" said Mrs. Brainard, who had heard Bryan spoken of as a Christian man.

"No, ma'am, but we have no words together on the subjeck, for he's a scholar and I am not; and he has a great deal of this world's wisdom to bring agin my faith. But you know, ma'am, that when a poor body like me takes hold on the arm of the Lord, there may be *overcomingness* in the grip; so I must fetch him that way."

"It is the only way, Bryan. Keep fast hold of that soul and the Saviour by prayer, and they may be brought into a life-giving union."

"May I tell you, ma'am," said Bryan—"for perhaps you would like to know—that little Miss Mary and the master had a

talk this morning all by theirselves? 'Twas but a word I heard as I passed by, but I saw how it was when I came in again to draw the lounge through the winder. I says to myself, 'Lord bless her and put *power* into her words.' Mr. Denton was very high and mighty, no doubt, over what she said; but there's One can bring him low, and that's where he'll have to get afore he enters in."

"Here," thought Mrs. Brainard, "is the clue to Mary's trouble to-day. Dear child! May the Lord guide and accept her feeble efforts!"

Bryan had a busy time when he got back. There was a tea-table to be improvised in the parlor, close by Mr. Denton's chair.

"Something cozy, Bryan," said he. "We are going to have a tea-party. I am to be grandfather, and Miss Kittie is to preside. —Had you not better go with Bryan and bespeak the entertainment, little housekeeper? Make a raid on all mother's stores, and send out for more if there is not enough in the pantry."

Kittie's eyes sparkled with delight.

"Have you any little dishes here, Bryan,"

she whispered, "with a tea-pot so high?" with her two chubby hands measuring the exact height of one which she had seen once, and which she had fondly cherished in her memory for weeks as the prettiest little tea-pot in the world.

"Yes, yes, Miss Kittie; and what we can't find here we'll beg next door."

"That's a bright idea, Bryan," said Mr. Denton. "Borrow Mrs. Silvey's china *tête-à-tête* set, which, with mine, will be enough for the little lady's fancy."

It was a goodly array, Kittie thought, and the time to gather round the table was very slow in coming.

"Shall I be tea-potter?" she asked as modestly as was consistent with her hopeful glee.

"Certainly, Miss Kittie;" and Mr. Denton kept his face as sober as was possible under the circumstances.—"Help her up, Bryan. Isn't the chair high enough? Pile on a dictionary or two. I want to see her over that tea-pot."

"Isn't it pretty and nice?" said she, lifting the lids to look at the tea and the sugar

before Bryan had her fairly balanced on her seat.

"I think so," was the reply; but when he said it, Mr. Denton was not at all looking where Kittie did.

"How do you take your tea, sir?" asked the little matron, pouring out and mixing things without waiting to hear his answer.

"Just as you do, Miss Kittie."

"Send him the milk-pitcher and sugar-bowl, and let him suit himself. That is the way ladies do," said George, who thought it was high time that Kittie's wild career should be a little checked.

"By no means, George," exclaimed the host, with a wink at that grave youngster. "It's charming as it is."

Kittie was flushed and triumphant, and went on pouring milk, tea and sugar into the cups that were continually passed to her, till Mrs. Denton's maid, coming in to see where the frequent relays of milk were going, stood in the open door and laughed to see Mr. Denton, who always took his tea clear and strong, pouring down cup after cup of a mixture as various in its propor-

tions as the materials on the little tray admitted of.

"I am afraid you are neglecting yourself, Miss Kittie."

"Oh no, I thank you; Bryan has helped me."

"Sure enough, sir," said that official. "Here it is, all piled up beside her plate."

"I'm going to eat now;" and Kittie began after the fashion most endeared to every childish heart, and, with cake first and bread and butter for old acquaintance' sake, finished her meal in time to leave the table with the rest.

"I never had such a nice supper in all my life," she said, with a sigh of satisfaction.

"Nor I," exclaimed Mr. Denton. "Never!"

"Cake first and all!" said George, who had had time to observe the proprieties. "What would grandma say?"

"Never mind, George; cake is as good any day as bread and butter are. It ought to come first sometimes."

Mr. Denton was old enough to know, so the subject was dropped.

Charlie, who had been the only one in the party who had given that strict attention to the eatables which growing boys generally pay to a supper-table, had leisure at last to bring out some home-experience that struck admiration to the heart of every beholder. The supper-dishes were to pile and clear away, and Bryan got so mixed up with the small folks that he forgot he was not one of them.

"That isn't the way my mother does," said Charlie, watching him with becoming sobriety. "Let me take hold there."

"Stand aside, Bryan," said Mr. Denton, with a wave of his hand. "Honor to whom honor is due. Let us give the Clemsons a fair chance now."

"We take off the silver first," said Charlie, with a dangerous clatter extricating some spoons from a tipsy pile of plates Bryan had just dropped in obedience to orders. "Now they go so, with the biggest at the bottom," arranging them accordingly.

"Now, that is what I call orthodox," said the host; while Ann, coming in to give the finishing stroke, whispered in a

hearty aside, as she bore off the remains of the feast,

"Dearie me! He do know, don't he?"

"But I tell you what," said Charlie: "I like Mr. Denton to see to the eating part. Wasn't that jolly?"

All at once Kittie sobered down as she stood by Mr. Denton's chair. She was thinking of Willie—dear little Willie—and whispered his name:

"We shouldn't laugh so. Did you forget?"

"No, no! How could I?" groaned Mr. Denton, throwing his head wearily back. "I want to forget some things. I have enough dark hours."

And so he had. The long night now setting in had no peaceful thoughts in store for him. Smile as he might with these bright young faces about him, it was but for a moment; then all was dark again. No light was shining for him across the little grave which had just been opened at his feet; no hope was beaming beyond that other world which he feared was waiting for him beside it.

"Say not 'tis thy pulse's beating:
'Tis thy heart of sin;
'Tis thy Saviour knocks and calleth:
'Rise and let me in!'"

CHAPTER XII.

FRESH EXPERIENCES.

"Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear Thy name."

CHARLIE'S boisterous joy over his mother's expected return began the next morning before he was fairly out of bed. He dressed and ate his breakfast in such haste that he had more time to dispose of than usual before the boat was due. He could not spend it on the road to the pier, and he was too anxious to go to meet his mother to enjoy his usual bath, seeing that the omnibus might go off without him.

But he and Mary found themselves at last by the water-side waiting till their mother should make her appearance in the stream of passengers which daily poured from the arriving boat. Charlie had scrambled down from the top of the omnibus, where he had

been perched beside the driver, and stood with his sister where he could spring forward at the first glimpse of her.

But the last passengers were in sight, and she was not among them. The children ran through the empty cabins, and then came back to their starting-point with very anxious hearts. Neither of them had ever before been so long away from their mother, and, having seen very little of the world, some unreasonable fears presented themselves.

"Say, Mary," said Charlie, pulling at her hand to attract her attention, "do you suppose mother will come back?"

"Why, of course she will, Charlie. What made you think she wouldn't?"

"Nothing made me," said Charlie, evasively; "only— Well, things do happen sometimes, you know."

The troubled expression on both faces attracted the attention of an old gentleman who stood not far away.

"Is anybody disappointed here?" he asked, in a kindly tone, and laying his hand in a fatherly way on Charlie's shoulder.

"We were expecting mother, and she has not come," said Mary.

"Ah! that is the trouble, is it? Well, I should think it could all be explained. Where was she coming from?"

"Fairview, sir."

"Ah! She was late for the train, perhaps, or it missed a connection somewhere. No; that can't be, for there is a gentleman who has just come through from Fairview."

On inquiry, it was found that there was no other way-train from Fairview for twenty-four hours.

"There may be a letter or a telegram for you at home which will clear up the mystery," he suggested.

The children had not thought of that, and made haste to get on the omnibus, which was just about starting for the hotel. They found that the old gentleman was going the same way; so they took a seat beside him.

"Seems to me I ought to know who you are by this time," he said, looking into their faces. "Mary and Charlie Clemson," he exclaimed, repeating the words slowly after

them. "I knew people of that name once; their names were Charles and Mary too. They lived in Mapleton, on the Hudson. Excellent young people they were. You look like them."

"Our house is in Mapleton, on the Hudson River, and father used to say we were the only Clemson family who ever lived there," said Mary.

"Well, well! Then you must really be the grandchildren of Charles Clemson, the friend of the poor, the widow and the fatherless, the famous peacemaker who cheated so many lawyers out of their fees. So you are named for him, my boy? Well, all I can say is that you come of a royal line, and you must see to it that the honor of the family is kept up. Tell your mother when she comes home—as I hope she will to-morrow—that I shall do myself the pleasure of soon calling upon her—that Mr. Griffith of Boston desires to renew an old and valued acquaintance. She will know who I am;" and the old gentleman took his beaming face out of the omnibus.

Mr. Griffith had spoken loudly enough to

be heard by every one around him, and the children were so much embarrassed to find themselves thus observed that they did not notice at which hotel he got out. They were soon informed, however. A flashily-dressed young man who sat near remarked to his companion,

"That is Griffith, the millionaire. Queer old chap. Puts up at the Selwyn House.—Play your cards well, boy," turning to Charlie, "and you may get something handsome out of the old fellow."

A sweet-voiced and sweet-faced lady in a Quaker bonnet who sat opposite leaned over at this and whispered, with a smile,

"Thee'll find that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."

Charlie flushed with pleasure at the kind allusion to what Mr. Griffith had said of the grandfather whom he never had seen, and he did not forget, when he came to give Mrs. Brainard an account of their strange introduction to Mr. Griffith, to tell what an impression had been made on their fellow-passengers.

"What did that man mean, Aunt Julia? What is a 'millionaire'? How could I make 'something handsome' out of Mr. Griffith?"

"One question at once, Charlie, if you please. A millionaire is a man who is worth a million or more of dollars. That man knew that Mr. Griffith was very rich and had no children living, and he was advising you to get all the money you could out of him because he is such a friend of the family."

"How mean!" exclaimed Charlie, indignantly. "Did the fellow think I was a beggar?"

"He was only judging of your feelings by his own, Charlie; in his estimate of life money is no doubt the principal thing. Your Quaker friend had a different opinion; she thinks, as I do, that you have no inheritance like the good name your father and your grandfather left. You are too young to know all it is worth to you, but some day you will understand, no doubt, that 'a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.'"

The evening mail brought the expected message from Mrs. Clemson. Charlie, to whom the letter was addressed, read it aloud to the company with so many flourishes and additions of his own that an eavesdropper might have thought he was having a conversation with the writer, in this wise:

MY DEAR SON:

Isn't this the first letter that ever came to you through the post-office?

"'Course it is!"

I suppose you would rather do without it, however, than have your mother stay away when you were expecting her home?

"That's a fact!"

I hope that you have been a very good boy—

"Haven't I, Aunt Julia?"

—as you generally are.

"Hurrah! D'ye hear that, Mary?"

I am not sure whether I shall come home to-morrow or stay over Sunday with Mrs. Denton at her old home.

"Oh dear! Two days more! I wish she had never gone away."

If I remain, it will be because Mrs. Denton is not able to return.

"Can't she get along without my mother?"

I would not disappoint you so if I had not read in the Bible that we must do unto others as we would that others should do unto us.

"Why can't Mrs. Denton 'do unto others' too, I'd like to know?"

You may come down to the boat for me to-morrow if you wish—

"Won't I, though!"

—but if I should not come, try and be patient. Both my children need to learn that lesson.

"That's for you, Mary!"

Give dearest love and a kiss to all.

From your loving mother,

MARY L. CLEMSON.

Mary too had a letter, from Emily Grant, which we must read with her, but not quite in Charlie's fashion:

DEAR MARY: Don't you tell, for all the world, what's in this letter! I expect to go to Switzerland to school for two years. Mamma has a sister there, you know, and she has sent for me to come. This is

a great secret, though, for we are not sure that papa can afford it. Papa has had no end of trouble in his business lately. I feel so bad about it sometimes I don't know what to do.

Now, Mary Clemson, you're not to tell this for anything, will you? I know you won't, for you are so much better than I am, if I never did own it before.

Auntie says I need not get any handsome new dresses if I come, for young ladies dress so much more simply over there than they do here. Your dresses would suit better than mine for that reason. Wouldn't it be nice if you could go too, Mary? Mrs. Brainard has such heaps of money I should think she could take you to Europe as well as not; only your mother is so particular she wouldn't like to ask her to do it.

Won't Miss Williams be mad when she finds I'm going to leave her pokey old school? I'm glad to go away, if it's only to spite her. I know I never was really a favorite with her, though she pretended that I was, to please papa, because she thought he had money. Don't you stay with her a minute longer than you can help, and tease your mother to let you go with me, won't you?

Now, Mary, be sure and not tell anybody what I've told you in this letter. With lots of love from us all, I am

Your true friend,

EMILY.

"Do you think it is very wrong to want

to tell other people's secrets, Aunt Julia?" questioned Mary as she lingered to say "Good-night."

"No, dear; a secret is sometimes a very burdensome thing. I always have to share mine with my best Friend."

Still the hand was on the latch, and the fair young face looked so anxious that Mrs. Brainard, who remembered that "mother" was gone, called Mary back to the seat she had just left.

"Perhaps I already know what troubles you, dear child," she said, stroking back the brown curls. "Your letter to-night was from Emily Grant of Mapleton. Am I not right?"

"Yes, auntie."

"I saw the postmark," said Mrs. Brainard. "It should have been here before, since it was mailed on the tenth. It is likely that Emily knew then of her father's business troubles. To-night's paper has later news, which confirms all his fears. His name is reported in a list of failures yesterday. He is likely to lose everything."

"Oh, auntie, it can't be possible! Lose

the beautiful new house, and the carriages, and Emily's pony, and—and—"

Mary was startled to think how nearly she had betrayed her friend's confidence.

"You need not tell me Emily's secret, dear, but be sure and tell Jesus; he can help her."

"She isn't a Christian, auntie. She says that she doesn't want to be until she is ever so much older."

"That's nothing, Mary; she may hear her Saviour's gentle voice in this time of trial as she never did before. Let us pray that she may," said Mrs. Brainard.

What Emily had written in her letter about plain clothes was just what might have been expected from that outspoken young lady; but, often as she had said these hard things, Mary had never learned to bear them patiently until that night.

"Poor Emily!" she thought; "it will be ever so much harder for her not to have a pony and to wear made-over dresses than it is for me. And she can't go to Switzerland, either. Dear me! how many strange things are happening now in Mapleton!"

In the press of such thoughts as these her head had nestled on its pillow before she remembered that she had intended to tell Jesus all about Emily, and how much her friend was just then needing him. She arose and knelt by her bedside with a new feeling suddenly springing up in her heart for which as yet she had no words. Was not the Friend who stooped to hear her prayer Emily's Friend too? Yes, she could reach her through him. The barriers between them seemed all at once to melt away before Him to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. How near he was, how ready to hear her prayer and to seek and save the wandering lamb who as yet knew not the Shepherd's voice! Yet this was the same young Christian who only the day before had forgotten to take a far deeper trouble than this to Jesus! As she had once said, she seemed to be "beginning, beginning, beginning, all the time," and had to learn over and over again the simplest lessons of faith.

CHAPTER XIII.

ABOUT GRANDFATHER CLEMSON.

"I would not halve my service:
His only it must be—
His *only*—who so loved me,
And gave himself for me."

FOUR children instead of two were down on the wharf to meet Mrs. Clemson when at last, after many delays, she came home.

"Mother," said Charlie, nestling close to her as they rode back in the great hotel omnibus, "we had the queerest Sunday you ever saw. We didn't go to church or Sunday-school, or read our Bibles or anything till night; then Mary said it was too bad, and she read to us about Moses in the bulrushes. You see, Aunt Julia was ever so sick, and we couldn't be with her; and Mr. Nesbit said that Sunday wasn't coming any nearer than the flagstaff that day because he

was short of preachers. Mr. Denton sent Bryan after breakfast to ask all of us to come over and take dinner with him, and we went early. He teased Mary awfully all day, but she never got mad a bit. First she told how him your great-grandmother came over in the Mayflower, and he laughed and said, 'Well, well! I have always wished that that boat-load of prigs had been scuttled before they landed, but now I am glad that some of them came ashore.' He wouldn't call her anything but 'Saint Mary, Jr.,' after that."

"Dear child!" thought Mrs. Clemson, looking over to the corner to which Mary had retreated after patiently giving up to Charlie the coveted seat by mother; "she is certainly improving."

But that evening Mary was her old self again. Who could want to be with mother so much as she did? Her young heart was burdened with new perplexities, and she grew impatient with everybody and everything that came between her and the one friend to whom she could confide them.

The story of the tea-party had to be re-

hearsed with all the enthusiasm due to so pleasant an occasion, Kittie coming in with this exclamation at what she thought was a proper point for a climax:

"And I was tea-potter, 'cause Mary wouldn't go."

"I suppose I can guess what that office is," said Mrs. Clemson, smiling, as she took the little girl on her lap; "I used to be more fond of pouring out tea than I am now. But I think you might have had that pleasure even if Mary had been there. —Why did you not go, dear?" with an inquiring look into her daughter's face.

"Because she got into a pet about something—nobody knows what—and wouldn't go," said Charlie, decidedly.

"No, I didn't, Charlie. I can answer for myself; you don't know anything at all about it."

Mary's tone was anything but pleasant; so, although her mother thought it likely she had reason to be grieved with her brother, she checked her before she said anything more in the same defiant spirit:

"Wait, children; you are both impatient.

We'll talk this matter over at a more suitable time. Let me tell you now about my journey. It was a sad one, of course, and yet I come home with a very thankful heart. I thought of you all so much, and of God's mercy to us. Even this little one," she said, drawing Kittie closer to her, "who has lost father, mother and home, has reason to be very thankful for what she has been taught and believes about Jesus and heaven. Those I have been with seem to know nothing about the Friend of sinners; his words are only empty sounds to them; and so they are not comforted by the thought of his love in making it possible for Willie to go to heaven. They speak as if he was there, but the way he went is all dark. I sat with Mrs. Denton by his coffin all the way. When we reached N—— and took the train for Fairview, she insisted on going into the baggage-car with it; and the conductor kindly arranged an empty one for us, so that it was comfortable. Chairs were put in for Mrs. Denton, her father and myself, and the doors were opened on each side for light and ventilation. We could not have had a pleasanter view

than we had. The country is green and smiling after our August rains, and that part of it through which our road lay is beautifully cultivated. As we rode swiftly along by the farms and villages I saw on every side the signs of busy life. Men were at work in the fields gathering in the harvest, children at play around the doors, and I thought of that little one before me whose folded hands seemed to say that all his earthly work was done."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Brainard, who had been an interested listener all the time, "the true object of the child's life is yet to be accomplished. God may yet use him to bring that afflicted mother and brother to himself."

"I cannot but hope that he will, auntie," was the reply; "God often opens hearts with a sorrow. Yet I thought very often during the day how poor and feeble our best words are unless God himself puts light into them. All I could say—which was but little—seemed to avail nothing with Mrs. Denton. A grave had been made for Willie in a luxuriant bed of periwinkles, and so carefully had

the work been done that it looked as if the dark-green leaves had only been gently pulled aside to give him room. Just before he was laid there we again looked at his face. The sun shone full upon it, and it seemed as if he might open his eyes and smile on us. His mother bent down and said, as she kissed him,

"'For the last time, my Willie—the last time!'

"'Do not say so,' I whispered. 'Jesus asks you to meet your boy again in a world where death can never enter.'

"She pressed my hand in silence; and last night, when we were in our quiet room at N——, she asked me to repeat to her what I had said in the churchyard. I saw she was willing to hear whatever related to her sorrow."

A call from Mr. Griffith interrupted Mrs. Clemson's story, which, sad as it was, had deeply interested her listeners, young and old.

Their visitor could tell them a great deal about Mapleton. In all their lives Mary and Charlie had never heard so much of

old times in the Clemson family as they did that night. They were particularly eager to hear what he had to say about that wonderful grandfather whose deeds were so praiseworthy, but they were not prepared for the fact, incidentally mentioned in Mr. Griffith's story, that this good man had once been a distiller.

"When I first came to this country, about fifty years ago," said Mr. Griffith, "old Squire Clemson had the best distillery in the country, and there were nearly twenty of them. He and his two oldest boys were making money hand over hand as times went then. My brother, Alick, who was a steady-going young fellow, had saved his money and built a pretty little house for himself and laid out a flower-garden, but, strange to say, he had never married. He had always been very close-mouthed about his own affairs; so, when he took it into his head to send to the old country for me and my family to come and live with him, he told no one but the squire. In fact, no one else knew that he had any relations.

"We had a long stormy voyage. But a few

days before we landed poor Alick suddenly died. We came straight to Mapleton, but we were at the door of Alick's house before we heard that he had been buried for a week. The widow of one of Alick's comrades had been keeping house for him, and she was still in possession. She was, of course, as much surprised to see us as I was to find that I was not expected in my brother's house. We had some angry words, and before long I was turned out of doors by the neighbors who came to hear what was going on. They all made out that Alick had given his house to this woman, and that nobody had ever heard of me. I suppose it may have been so, but it was hard to be treated as an impostor.

"When the squire heard of it, he said to me, quietly,

"'John, get another house and go peaceably to work. Leave the case to me; I'll see you righted, never fear.'

"And he did. In six months I was living in my own home, and no thanks to anybody but Mr. Clemson. Many's the case like that he settled for the poor.

"But after a while the old gentleman got into trouble himself. You may know whose advice he asked when I tell you what he did. One day he sent for me to come into his private office. He was at his desk writing when I came in, and for a few minutes he kept on without looking up. By and by he shoved back his chair and said,

"'Well, John, have you half an hour to spare this evening?'

"I told him I had, and then he said, after thinking a bit,

"'D'ye think, John, if you were put to it, you could find other business in Mapleton?'

"I was astonished.

"'Aren't you satisfied with me, squire?' says I.

"'Oh yes,' he said, 'perfectly satisfied; you will do well wherever you go, John. But I'm not satisfied with myself, and still less with my business. I've been a distiller for ten years; I never made so much money at anything else in my life; but I tell you, John, there's a curse on the business. I dare not go on. I have six sons; I want the blessing of God for them all more than I

want anything else in the world, and it won't come while I keep on this deadly liquor traffic. I am convinced that it is ruining more men in soul and body than anything else in the country.'

"'Why, squire,' said I, 'you must excuse me, but it seems to me you are going too far in this matter. Your children are all doing well; you have a son in the ministry, three others are church-members and the rest are as likely boys as I ever saw.'

"'Yes, yes!' he said; 'God has been very merciful to me in my blindness, but my eyes are opened now. My wife has been praying for years they might be, and now I see as she does. John and his wife feel as we do. Yes, we must stop it—stop it at once and for ever. I'm going down to my grave with clean hands and no blood on my skirts. I want all my men to help me out in this, for each one has some sacrifice to make.'

"I never knew how far the squire meant to go until the next week. One of his old customers came and offered to buy him out at his own price and carry on the business. But he wouldn't hear a word to it.

"'No,' he said; 'Mapleton shall not be cursed with a distillery if I can help it.'

"He shut up that building the next Saturday, and it has never been opened since. The squire and John went there after the men had gone, and made short work of the liquor. The squire said it went against his conscience to poison the fishes in the river; so they rolled the barrels to an old well in the enclosure and poured the liquor down there till the last drop was gone.

"That formed the beginning of a great temperance movement; seventeen distilleries went down in two years in that neighborhood. There was but one man, however, who had courage and principle enough to make such a clean sweep as the squire did. Seems to me Squire Clemson's white head would rise up in the grave if any of his descendants should so far dishonor his good name as to drink of the intoxicating cup."

"What you say is quite new and surprising to my children," said Mrs. Clemson. "They have such a horror of liquor and everything relating to it that I must confess I shrank from telling them that their own

grandfather was a distiller. It cannot be said, however, that they have inherited a cent he gained in that business, for he lost it all. My husband had his own way to make in the world."

"He was none the worse for that, Mrs. Clemson—none the worse for that. I hear that in the battle of life he turned out to be as good a soldier as his grandfather, and that is praise enough for any man."

CHAPTER XIV.

MARY'S DIFFICULTIES.

"I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee."

"MOTHER," said Mary that night when they were alone together, "I did go and see Mr. Denton the day after the funeral."

"Why did you not say so when I asked you, my dear?"

"Because I did not go with the rest; I went alone. We had such a troublesome time about the whole of it! Charlie is a real tease when you are not here."

"And how is it with his sister?" asked the mother.

"I let him alone—indeed I do; and if I knew he had such things to trouble him as I have, I wouldn't laugh at him as he

does at me. But he is always in such a frolic!"

"Then you had some other trouble besides Charlie's fun?" said Mrs. Clemson, inquiringly.

"You might not think it was trouble, but it seemed so to me. I wish so much that I had not gone to see Mr. Denton at all. And yet I wanted to do just right."

"Did you? Then you need not be anxious, Mary; God always looks at the heart when he judges our work. If he saw that you wanted to please him first of all, he will take care of the rest. But you are sure you did want to do so?"

"It seems to me you wouldn't ask that if you knew just how it all was," said Mary, in a grieved tone.

"How was it, then, dear?"

"I can hardly tell how it was; only I was trying to do everything just right, and everything went wrong."

"With you or with somebody else, Mary?"

"It was with me at last, but I started right—I know I did. And I'm so discouraged I don't know what to do. Every little

while all my thoughts get so mixed up that I feel like two or three people at once. I never supposed it would be so."

It was the old story again—trouble because her eyes were turned away from Jesus, from whom cometh all our strength. "Without me," he says, "ye can do nothing."

Mrs. Clemson had heard from her aunt about Bryan's story, and so had a clue to Mary's distress.

"Tell me," she said, tenderly, "just what troubles you. Perhaps I can understand the difficulty better than you suppose."

But Mary did not find it an easy matter to do this; she was very much afraid of being misunderstood even by this nearest and dearest friend of all. But, as her mother was quietly waiting to hear the story, she ventured upon it after a few moments' hesitation, though she scarcely knew where or how to begin:

"You know, mother, how the ministers talk about everybody's having something to do—I mean something to do for Jesus. I have often heard that even children have their work. They always tell us on anni-

versary days about different ones who have done so much and it all came out so well. Do you remember how one gentleman told us about a child—a little girl—who did so much good and was the means of her brother's becoming a Christian? After she died he took up her work and preached the gospel. I liked the story so much, because, just as he sat down, he said, 'I am Eva Steadman's brother, led to Jesus by a little girl like one of you.' That was her name, and there, right before our eyes, was what she did. Wasn't it good? I thought, 'Oh, if *I* could do so!'"

"I remember it now," said Mrs. Clemson; "it was very interesting. I believe it is true that children have their part to do in bringing the world to Jesus, but it is all-important that we should have a right motive in this work. What is yours?"

"To speak for Jesus. What else could it be, mother dear?"

"You might have many others even without knowing it. We are often blind to what is in our own hearts."

"But I didn't think I was good—I am

sure I'm not—but I wanted Mr. Denton to know what Jesus could do for him, and I tried to tell him. After I began to speak it wasn't hard till I found he didn't care about what I said, and even then I went on; for it all seemed so plain to me that Jesus could save him if he only believed it. But he never asked me to come again or sent for me when the children stayed to tea, and it seems that all I said was worse than nothing. And yesterday, when I went to see him again, he teased me all day."

Mary leaned her head on her mother's shoulder to hide her tears.

"Dear child, are you not willing to bear a cross for Jesus?"

"Why, yes," sobbed Mary; "that was just what I was trying to do."

"The effort to speak to Mr. Denton was only a part of the cross; his contempt and his indifference were laid upon you for Christ's sake too. Bear them as he bore scorn and reproach for you."

This was silencing for a while, for the truth went home: Mary had indeed put aside the very cross Jesus had borne for

her. Still, willing to justify herself, she said,

"I don't see how I could help being grieved about Mr. Denton."

"Nor I; it is very natural to feel the loss of so pleasant a friendship. But if you did right to speak to him, Jesus will take care of all the rest. But you may have imagined a slight which was never intended; you are always over-sensitive about the approbation of others."

"Not this time; I know he meant it."

"It is likely that Mr. Denton shrinks from the truth," said Mrs. Clemson. "He cannot be at rest after such a warning as he has had in Willie's death. You must take him to God in prayer, my child: 'Prayer moves the Arm that moves the world.'" You will not need to wait till you get to heaven for part of your reward, even though you should never know of Mr. Denton's conversion."

"Why, mother," said Mary, smiling a little through her tears, "you talk so strong! Just as if you *knew!*"

"I do know. I believe God's promise

that 'they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.' That added strength is a reward we gain every time we put faith in Jesus. Is not that cheering?"

"I think it is," answered Mary, taking heart again.

"And even when we have so far forgotten life's true end as to desire to work for Jesus that we may win glory for ourselves, faith in his cleansing blood will cure this sin in our hearts. You have been seeking for success, and have been disappointed in your particular object; but God was showing you in it the selfishness of your heart and would lead you to a higher and holier aim than you have had. In his own way and time, though perhaps not in your sight, he will attend to the seed you have been sowing. Trust him as Eva Steadman did. She never saw her success on earth, but it may be that she looks upon it from the heavenly hills."

"Isn't it strange that I never thought of that? I am always forgetting what I ought to remember."

"Do not be discouraged," said her mother, cheerily. "There is a memory that will

hold all the precious truth we need, and Jesus gives it to every seeking heart. Remember your text," pointing to where it was pinned to her mirror:

HE SHALL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS

AND

BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE,

WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU.

Summer days were numbered, though summer weather lingered a while after the early frosts of September. The gay crowds which had been flowing into the hotel from every part of the land during the heat of the season were now ebbing away. The long halls looked quite empty and desolate, and even the music had in it a strain of sadness as it sounded through the deserted rooms.

The Dentons too were flitting. Immediate change of air and scene had been recommended to Mrs. Denton, for herself as well as for her invalid son, and they were hastening away rather earlier than the rest of the visitors, in hope of getting relief for mind

and body. But Mrs. Clemson, who had spent much time with the lonely mother, could see that hers was a wound which no earthly balm could heal, and it had been her daily prayer that in some way she might be able to reach this stricken heart with the consolations of the gospel. The Spirit of God had so opened the Bible to her own understanding that it seemed at times that she could not fail to bring her friend to see the truth as plainly as she herself saw it.

But, earnest as she was in sowing the seed, the fruit did not appear. More than once was she reminded of her own words to Mary: "Leave results humbly and quietly with God." This she was enabled to do; for when the day of parting came, she bade Mrs. Denton good-bye with one of God's sweetest promises singing like a bird in her heart: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." Even though she might never again speak to her bereaved and unbelieving friend, yet she could follow her as closely as ever in the Heaven-appointed path of prayer.

Often, in the few days intervening between

Willie's funeral and the breaking up of this seashore home, Mary had heard her mother allude to this deep desire for the conversion of this family.

One night, just before the Dentons left the shore, she was aroused by some noisy footsteps in the hall. She started up, thinking for a moment that it was morning and she must have overslept herself, as one might very easily do in the delightful sea-air. Then she remembered that there was to be a hop in one of the hotels near by, and that about the time she went to bed some of their neighbors on that floor were preparing to go.

"They must be back again," she thought, "and have to run to one another's rooms to talk over everything before they can go to sleep."

She was again turning over to her own pillow for another long sweet sleep, when she found that her mother's usual place at her side was vacant. Again starting up to look and to listen, she saw in the moonlight that streamed through the open window a white figure kneeling in a dim corner of the room. She could understand it all now, for

the few low words which reached her ear, though broken by deep emotion, told for whom her mother had risen to plead with God. Nothing that Mary had heard her say about her love to God and his work and her faith in his word could make such a deep impression on the child's mind as did this scene so unintentionally brought before her. But it was much deepened when she saw how patiently her mother gave up her will to God and let Mrs. Denton go away without seeing an answer to her prayer. So much is example better than precept in training young hearts to walk by faith.

The lesson was timely. Mary had a trial before her. In his usual easy, good-natured way, young Denton had, after a little assumed indifference, drawn her back into her old friendship for him, and she had made more than one pleasant visit with the other children before the little circle around his invalid-chair was scattered far and wide. He seemed entirely to have forgotten that any coldness had arisen between them, until the evening before he left, when they were bidding him "Good-night."

"All of you little folks must come over in the morning and see me off," he said, "unless you mean to get blue over the last hand-shaking; in which case I would rather you should stay away. D'ye hear?"

All but Mary had reached the door; she had lingered a little behind the rest to put in better order for her walk home through the breezy night-air some prints Mr. Denton had just given her.

"As for you, my little saint," he said, giving her arm a pinch which made her look up and catch in his eye all of the mischievous twinkle which went with his words, "do you mean to let me off without a sermon, or do you not? You see I am as hardened as ever."

A chill came to Mary's heart; with a pained, startled look, she drew back from him and turned to the door.

"Do not go looking that way," he exclaimed, trying to detain her; "I was only jesting."

But she would not give him the hand after which he reached, nor would she let him see the face so crimson with indignation.

"So you will not forgive me?" he said, laughingly. "You ought to: it's a part of the plan. I have read up on the subject, you see."

He thought she had gone, for his last words scarcely reached her; but after a few moments' hesitation in the hall she came back flushed still, and too much excited to make any other reply than to offer her hand in token of reconciliation. Why should she be angry with his treatment of herself, when she knew that all his unkindness was aimed at her Master? It was only because she was his disciple that he spoke to her as he did. She was too timid to reply, but she took his hand with pity for his blindness, and with an unspoken prayer which gave to her "Good-night" a tenderness that went to the young man's heart. But her motives were misunderstood; they were entirely beyond all the wisdom which satisfied Harry Denton. He thought of her only as a sensitive child who was learning to control and hide her feelings with Spartan bravery, and whose native good sense and dignity would, under proper management, some day make a fine

woman of her. He took her offered hand with true respect and a word of apology for the pain he had caused her, though, as he went on in his light and careless way to speak of the difference in their feelings as a matter of very little consequence, she was more sure than ever that his heart was untouched by the truth.

"You must take Bryan home with you, Miss Mary," he added, in a softened tone. "The others seem to have gone on without you, and the streets are noisy to-night."

Bryan was only too glad to leave the trunks he was packing; so the two walked on together, very silently at first, for Mary was thinking over what Mr. Denton had said and what she had left unsaid, and wishing, as she was so apt to do, that her after-thoughts could come first, especially in such times as these.

"I am glad I went back, though I could not answer him," she exclaimed, thinking aloud, in forgetfulness that it was Bryan, and not "mother," who was her companion.

"What did you say, miss?" asked that worthy, coming nearer to catch her words.

"I was only thinking, Bryan, and uttered my thoughts; but then you know how it is. I was so sorry just now! I spoke to Mr. Denton once because he laughed at Christians. He does not care or think anything about such things; and when I try to answer him, I feel so confused and shut up that I don't get out the best words or do the best way at all."

Bryan looked down from his six feet of height with a beaming smile of sympathy:

"Well, miss, you see, I'm one of the shut-up kind too. I gets put into a corner quite frequent, but it's the best place to talk to the Lord Jesus, after all. I tell him about this young man and his heathenish talk, and I puts the case to him strong. 'Here he is,' I says, 'blind, lame, sick, dyin'. Lord, heal him! The power is with thee."

"Do you think he will ever be a Christian, Bryan?" asked Mary, anxiously.

"I can't think the Lord has put such a desire as this in my heart for nothing, miss. He doesn't deny himself, you see. It's only for us to follow on when he lights up the promises for us. And then, when I see you

too a-bringin' this sick man to the Lord, I cannot but believe our prayers will be answered in his own time. There's a promise left for the 'two that are agreed,' you know."

They had reached the door of the hotel, and it was time to say "Good-night."

"Bryan," said Mary, lingering a moment before she went in, "I wish you would write to me if Mr. Denton ever becomes a Christian. Can't you?"

"Indeed I will—that is, if it's the Lord's plan to let us know it *here*. He chooses sometimes to keep such news till we get home, and we may have this saved up for us to talk over when we sit down in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob."

CHAPTER XV.

FAREWELLS.

"Blest be the dear uniting love
That will not let us part!"

THE little party whose sayings and doings have made our story were about to part for widely-separated homes. Mrs. Brainard and her orphan grandchildren were going across the sea. The mother of George and Kittie had been born in England, and it was her wish that her little ones should be taken there to be educated; but they had been so constantly under Mrs. Brainard's care, and had so entwined themselves around her heart, that when the time came for separation she resolved to go with them herself to see them comfortably settled in their new home, if, indeed, she did not remain there permanently. So it might be months, and possibly years, before she would again meet her

dear friends in America. Her last days with Mrs. Clemson were very precious, for their long-tried friendship was

> "A fellowship of kindred hearts,
> And like to that above."

The children were making great plans for letter-writing; and if they had all been carried out, but little else could have been done.

"Mother, you won't have any more trouble now with Charlie about writing," said Mary as they were all strolling together on the beach one evening. "He has concluded, however, not to write that *History of the World.*"

"Has he?—How is that, Charlie? Was not the subject large enough?"

"Oh yes, mother; I could have managed that easy enough," said Charlie, not seeing any place where a laugh could come in; "but, you see, George and I have agreed to get off a letter to each other every day, and there wouldn't be much time to write the other thing, would there?"

"I should think not," she answered.

"You are glad that we are going to write

such nice long letters to each other, aren't you, mother? Mary is going to write too, and we'll all have one another's histories."

The mother looked happy enough, if that was all. Who would not be happy, with such a treasure of a boy as Charlie, all aglow with health and alive with love and fun? But no one could have the guidance of such a bright young life as his without care for his future development, and she was thinking as she walked along whether she should dampen the children's ardor by expressing her opinion of their plan, or leave them to find out for themselves that a daily correspondence was more than they could attend to.

"Of course I am glad to have you write to Georgie," she said, "but I am thinking about the every-day plan. Your school-days are full enough for a youngster who wants as much out-of-door life as you do. You had both better reconsider the matter and make a promise you can expect to stand by."

"So I think," said Mrs. Brainard. "Start as you can hold out, boys. Think before you make a promise, and then keep your word.

You will never be men who can be depended on if you do not learn this lesson while you are young."

Whatever reconsideration the matter required was finished up in that walk, for upon coming back to the hotel Mrs. Brainard found letters which hastened her departure several days sooner than she had at first intended, and the packing, which the children looked forward to as an occasion of great interest, was done at last in very short order. So rapidly was it done, indeed, that while the little folks had gone out for a race on the beach the next morning Mrs. Brainard and her niece had emptied drawers and closets of their contents, and had two trunks packed already, and another so full that Mary could not see how anybody could expect to crowd anything more into it.

"You'll see, my dear," said Mrs Brainard. "Appearances are often deceptive. Hand over that pile of things on the chair behind you, if you please, and then trot out into the hall and see what you can do with the rest of the children. They would like to run riot in this wilderness of drygoods."

But Kittie, coming in at another door at this precise moment, caught sight of what was going on and gave the alarm, and the sentinel gave way in the rush that followed.

"Six people make a crowd in these small quarters," cried Mrs. Clemson, in dismay, as she felt herself surrounded. "Somebody will have to leave the room, that's certain, or—"

"It needn't be me!" The voice sounded from the depths of a trunk, where Kittie's curly head was found by the committee of three which started instantly on the search for it. "I can live here and watch grandma pack. 'Twill be such fun!" and the sweet bird-voice suddenly came with a muffled sound from under the lid that George had dextrously shut down.

"Will the time ever come when boys will not be boys?" exclaimed Mrs. Brainard as she came to the rescue.—"Come out, little puss and take yourself off with all the rest."

"But I have packing to do, grandma; 'course I have. There's all my dollies."

"Miss Angelina and her entire wardrobe are already safely boxed, Kittie."

Now, Miss Angelina was a beautiful young lady that Grandma Fortesque had sent over from England and was expecting back in good order when Angelina's little mistress should go to that wonderful country. She had been brought out on festive occasions only; and when grown people had wound her up and put her in a proper attitude, she always bowed and said "Good-morning" in the most stately and respectful manner.

"Miss Angelina," said Mr. Adair, when he was first introduced to her, "is a beauty, a curiosity, an example and an exponent of fashion; but she does not win the heart."

Kittie eyed him as he made this large-worded speech, and, though she could not do more than guess at the meaning of half he said, she felt that he must have spoken her mind exactly, and henceforth gave up the case of Miss Angelina to the grown folks and turned her heart's best love to Jemima, that battered old darling that Nurse Bennet bought for her so long ago, and to Mary Anna Jones, that dearest and raggedest of all worn-out doll-babies.

"Oh, grandma," cried Kittie, in genuine

alarm, as she went to search for her treasures, "you would have forgotten these if I hadn't just come in time;" and she held out an armful of dolls forlorn and tumbled enough to show anybody who studied the ways of little girls that these poor creatures had borne with all the hugging, kissing and nursing of their little mistress, not to speak of the discipline she thought they required at times; and so, of course, they deserved all the love she heaped upon them.

"Why, Kittie," said her grandmother, with a very dubious look, "am I expected to find room for all those?"

"Such rubbish!" cried George, who always had time to superintend Kittie's movements. "I should say those were played out and had better go to the rag-man."

But Kittie heeded not such slurs:

"Please let them go;" and she kissed a poor snub nose so tenderly that grandma held out her arms and drew both the dollies and their mistress where she too could kiss.

"You can leave them to me, little one," said she; "they shall certainly go."

"Have you lots of room?" asked Kittie, suddenly struck by the difference between her humble friends and their surroundings, yet anxious to have them go.

"I can squeeze them in, dear; they are used to squeezing."

"Oh, you dearest, bestest grandma! I'm so glad! I'll kiss you over and over and over," suiting the action to the word and leaving grandma a little ruffled in consequence, as Kittie ran away with a fresh impulse of trust in her little heart where so many had been given before—trust that in all her little life had never been betrayed by an untruthful word or tone from those to whom she looked for guidance. Happy child, leaning so safely and so surely on human love, and so better prepared by life's sweetest training to say in answer to the voice of eternal truth,

> "My little all I here suspend
> Where the whole weight of heaven is hung."

But the time for farewells came at last—first to the sea-side walks where they had spent so much time together—such happy

days!—and then to one another in the cabin of the great ocean-steamer in which Mrs. Brainard had taken passage.

All was bustle and excitement there. Friends were coming and going with greetings and good-byes, parting gifts and parting directions and parting smiles and tears. A beautiful basket of flowers arrived for Mrs. Brainard, gathered by friendly hands in the garden of the old home, and tears came with its fragrant memories of departed days. Kittie found some little children crying in a corner over a dear papa who was going away, and she came back, sobbing with excitement, to find more cloudy faces where she had left sunshine.

"Oh, grandma," she cried, "there's such a many people good-byeing here! Sha'n't we go back to the land again, away from the great sea? I'm afraid."

"Darling," said Mrs. Clemson as she lifted the child to her lap, "we are saying 'Good-bye' for only a little while. Grandma and I are very glad to think how pleasant it will be to meet again;" and the smile that came with the words shone out from a heart to

which God's promises were a living, joyous reality.

"Yes," said Mrs. Brainard, "some time and somewhere in our Father's house we shall meet again. It may be here or yonder, but we have one love and one life and one eternal hope."

And so they parted.

The great ship loosed from her moorings and steamed majestically down through the flitting crowd of smaller vessels in New York Harbor, the sound of a gun booming over the waves as she glided off toward the Narrows; while Mrs. Clemson and the children once more turned toward dear old Mapleton.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOME AGAIN.

"She doeth little kindnesses
Which most leave undone or despise;
For naught that sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemèd in her eyes."

"I DO not think your faces were any brighter the morning we went away than they are to-night over this home-coming," said Mrs. Clemson to her children as the long train of cars drew near to Mapleton station.

Mary and Charlie had pressed to the car-windows to catch the first glimpses of familiar objects as they came in sight—the vane on the church-spire glittering in the sunset, just seen in the distance over the shoulder of Academy Hill, the old mill down by the bridge among its overshadowing elms, and, beyond, the white houses that lined the long village street.

Charlie had too much to look at to heed his mother's remark, but Mary turned and gave to the hand she was holding a very loving pressure which made her words mean a little more than they would have done without it.

"I am glad, mother—just as glad as I can be—to get home."

"After all?"

"Yes, ma'am, after all;" and she blushed a little as she remembered what she had said about the quiet, earnest life to which she was returning, and how she once fretted over the work she had in prospect at home and in the school-room.

"I thought so," said Mrs. Clemson.

Mary had a tell-tale face, and for some time her mother had been trying to read it. Not that it was unusual for her to look happy and chatter away about everything she saw, as she had been doing, but now there was in her manner an enthusiasm which could not be entirely explained by her joy at once more seeing old scenes and old faces. There was something on her mind which might find words at any moment, but which did

not, after all, though her mother seemed to think so, for she asked,

"What did you say, dear?"

"I didn't say anything, mother; I was only thinking;" and she laughed as she returned the inquiring gaze bent upon her. "People often ask me such questions."

"What kind of questions?"

"As though I had been talking when I have not said a word."

Mrs. Clemson laughed too at that, adding,

"I hardly wonder at that. Your thoughts sometimes make a great display of themselves on the surface without asking much help from your tongue."

"I know I might as well tell you of what I am thinking, because you will guess; you always do. But it doesn't seem to be the right time now. We are almost there, for there's Mr. Sanders's place, and—"

A hand was laid quietly on her shoulder, and she turned to see her dear old pastor's benignant face looking down at her.

"Dr. Anson!" cried she, giving him both hands by way of telling him what else she had to say of her joy at seeing him.

"You are welcome home, my dears, both of you—all of you," reaching over to the seat where Charlie sat; "I shall be glad enough to see you filling that empty seat in church next Sunday.—I miss the children, Mrs. Clemson, as much as I do their elders. But here are more people to say 'How d'ye do?' I'll stand aside and give them a chance."

The Clemsons received a warm welcome home. Everybody knew everybody else in Mapleton, especially in Dr. Anson's church where the Master had found some hearts and hands which so truly represented his that they seemed to attract others as he would had he been there in his seamless robe as of old, and very much the same kind of people.

One of these needy ones, after whom Christian love and faith had thus reached, drawing him into the fold, was Ben Maclean, a poor old stage-driver, once a castaway in the eyes of the world, and so needing more patience than any one could spare unless he had a stock of that charity which "suffereth long." Ben had met with many failures in business, among

other things, and even since he had forsaken the dram-shop and tried to take care of himself and his feeble wife he had been unable to shake off some of his thriftless habits. Some kind friend, "hoping all things" of him, had been setting him on his feet again whilst Mrs. Clemson had been away, and he stood there that evening by the station platform, as happy as he was sixty years before with his first new top, though the broken-down old carryall and dejected horse to which he called the attention of passengers looked as though they had been making a tour of the world and could not be expected much longer to weather life's struggles. He saw Mrs. Clemson as she alighted from the car, and tapped with his whip on the planks to attract her notice.

"See, mother!" cried Charlie, pulling her sleeve as they passed; "here is Ben with a new—I mean another—horse!"

Ben had begun to smile long before this. Mrs. Clemson was one of his chief favorites, and before he caught her eye the lines of his face had time to assume a truly open expression; but he said nothing until she spoke,

and then he was so much embarrassed between his joy at seeing her and the thought of how she would be affected at the sight of his establishment that his words, considered merely as an answer to her question, fell quite wide of the mark.

"Good-evening, Ben! How are you?"

"Yes'm; I'm at it agin, you see. 'Tain't much, though," he added, meekly, smoothing down the ancient curtains in a vain attempt to stop a gap which they had grown too short to cover; and they appeared more tattered and worn than ever in his eyes now that Mrs. Clemson stood by to see. "Will you git in, m'am? It'll go."

"Will it, Ben?" she asked, a dubious smile stealing out of the corners of her mouth.

The omnibus came dashing up just then with a gay pair of horses, making Ben's wagon and team seem all the worse.

"Out of the way there, Ben!" shouted the driver. "This is no place for scarecrows."

"I'd sell out, Ben, before I moved any, if I were you," said another; "you might

get seventy-five cents for the horse if you throw in the wagon."

Ben bore the raillery very good-naturedly, and drew off from the contested ground, still keeping his eye on Mrs. Clemson with hope beaming in every feature.

"Don't go too far away, Ben," said the lady; "I'll ride with you. But I think you will have to make two trips with us, for we have baggage."

"Yes'm; all right! I'll just come over, so that you kin git in."

In a moment Ben was again a man among men, and brought up his shaky horse and his more shaky carriage with great steadiness of purpose, backing up and wheeling round to give Mrs. Clemson the best possible advantage for climbing in. To crown his triumph, Dr. Anson came up in time to see him move off carefully with his precious load, and trot away trying to bear life's successes with suitable humility.

"'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,'" said the old pastor, walking home that evening under the maples.

"How many cups of cold water Ben does require! and if there is any one in the church who can find out when he needs one, it is Mrs. Clemson."

Ben had the road all to himself, for the carriages in waiting at the station all went by in a cloud of dust before he was fairly under way. Charlie looked longingly after them from his seat by Ben, for, like all boys, he preferred to ride behind a horse that had some spirit, particularly when there were other boys to look on, as there happened to be in this case. But he knew what his mother meant by choosing to ride with Ben, and his own kind heart had been touched, as hers had been, by the ridicule the poor old man had so patiently borne. He felt, as any noble nature might feel, for the weak and the defenceless; but his mother thought of Jesus and of what he had done for the poor despised one who believed on him, and how he had been left among Christ's brethren to receive his words and feel his Spirit through them.

Ben too understood it all in his rude, vague way; the Lord Jesus had spoken to his heart

through Mrs. Clemson many times before that evening.

"I kinder thought you'd ride with me, Mis' Clemson, though 'tain't much I have, but—"

The old man reflectively rubbed his chin, for his remaining thoughts were too much for speech.

"You wish you had a better team."

Charlie broke in with his thoughts, that would run on horses while looking at the poor animal before him.

"Yes, I do—not so much for myself, but it's for her, you see," pointing over his shoulder to Mrs. Clemson. "I kin git along 'most any way."

"I take the will for the deed, Ben," said Mrs. Clemson, cheerily. "I am very glad of this opportunity to ask how you are getting along and where you are staying now."

"Up the river-road, at Steve Grier's. I passes your house every day now;" and he turned to look at the effect his news produced on his hearers—or hearer, for Ben never seemed aware of the existence of the children while their mother was present.

Mrs. Clemson was suitably impressed, though her surprise arose from the fact that in making the round of tenement-houses in Mapleton he had lived but two months instead of the three he usually spent in one habitation.

"Ah!" she said; "you have got back there again?" for he had lived there twice before. "I am glad, for I can look after you a little this winter."

"And I can read to you so often, Ben," said Mary. "It's just the thing."

"Why, I was a-thinkin' of that only last night," said Ben. "There's Somebody," pointing solemnly upward as he spoke, "as knows what I wants."

"Ben, it is Mary who means to read to you. She will be glad to do some such work in Christ's stead."

"Yes'm. It's all the same to me, so as I hear what he says, and *do*, ma'am. That *doin'* is what fetches me."

"You must come and see us, Ben, when we are settled again. Mary shall read to you what it is the Lord expects of poor sinners—

"'How he makes the burden light,
Or doth the burden bear.'

He is very pitiful, you know."

"Yes'm. If it wa'n't fur that—" Ben turned his head, but could not hide the trembling in his voice. "But," he continued, "he always sends some of his folks to me."

"He always will," said Mrs. Clemson; "only trust him? Do you remember how, when Elijah went so far into the wilderness, the Lord sent ravens to feed him?"

"Yes'm." The old man was smiling now. "'Raven'! That's my horse's name. He's fetched me bread already. There's different ways, you see. Sometimes angels bring it direct. So I says to Clarie this morning." Clarie was his wife. "But there's your home, ma'am, stan'in' jest as you left it. You'll be thankfully received."

One would think so, if he saw no more than poor Fido's welcome. The little dog came racing down the road to meet them with so many frantic expressions of his joy around old Raven's head and feet that it was thought best to bring that animal to

a dead halt in order to let Charlie out or Fido in. To do one or the other was only a measure of safety.

Charlie got out and ran up the hill, as boys generally do under such joyous circumstances, taking the whole width of the road for his frolic with Fido, while the Grant boys, who had given up the travelers for that night and had gone home, hearing the din, concluded that Charlie had come, after all, and rushed with a "Hurrah!" across the orchard.

Mary was taking things a little more quietly, as Charlie made noise enough for both. But it was a happy time, and Ben was very thankful for his share in bringing it all about.

How the flowers had grown and blossomed out since they left! A bank of salvias, with here and there a geranium to brighten its green for July and August, was blazing now with all its scarlet splendors. The verbenas and the phloxes were aglow with bloom, and asters, pink and purple and white, were lifting up their full round faces as though they waited for a kiss.

"Oh, you beauty!" said Mary, dropping her satchel and stooping to one that stood like a fair bouquet among its fellows. "You are smiling all over at me.—See, mother! If this little pet should put on any more white, you couldn't see the green at all."

Mrs. Clemson, too, was delighted, and so was Fido, and so was everybody.

"Charlie, you will have to hold this dog or I cannot get into the house. He seems wild with joy."

So they all trooped in together and shut the door, as happy and as contented a family as ever nestled down on the river-bank at Mapleton—or anywhere else.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRYING DAYS.

"Coming as at first I came,
To take, and not bestow on Thee."

THIS is a busy world when we are on the watch for duties. It seemed so when Mary again came back into the old ways. There was much to do, in the schoolroom and out of it. New studies were to be taken up with different motives, and the old ones with fresh vigor; while the little round of duty and self-denial at home, contentedly as she had gone through it before, seemed far more worth the doing now, since it had been made plain to her that the work she had asked from Jesus might be there. So days went on before Mary had time to look back on the plans of which she had spoken to her mother when on the cars.

Coming home from school one afternoon,

she found her mother preparing for a walk. Bonnet and shawl were already on, and she was on the piazza tying up a bunch of autumn flowers while she waited for her daughter.

"Oh how pretty!" said Mary, coming up the walk. "That will please somebody. Who is it for, mother?"

"Clarie Maclean," was the reply; "it is high time we went up to look after her and her poor old Ben. I have not seen him pass for several days. Have you?"

"I am afraid he is sick," said Mary. "Fannie Grant told me yesterday that he had been hurt in the stable and the doctor had been called. I forgot to speak of it."

"It is strange you did not tell me of this," said her mother. "However, we will go now, and you may carry part of my load. I have a satchel besides my flowers."

"I don't know which is most like you," said Mary, laughing, as she ran in with her books; "so you will have to choose which I shall carry—though, so far as Ben is concerned, he won't look at either unless you hand it to him."

Mrs. Clemson smiled:

"He has not many ideas, poor Ben! His field of knowledge will widen out very soon. He must be nearly fourscore years old."

They were out in the road by this time, under the shadow of the row of maple trees which lined the way even when it left houses and gardens behind for a while to climb a rocky hill which overhung the river. A dense, dark growth of cedars still held possession to the right and left as ancient tenants of the soil, and were only waiting till the maples, yellowing now so fast, should lose their transient glory and leave them alone to brighten the winter days. It was a place where blackberry-vines were much at home, and earlier in the year their snowy blossoms trailed over the rocks with promises of fruit which the children of the neighborhood always counted on and never failed to find.

Mary loved the place for its wild flowers. It was so stony and undesirable a spot for cultivation that thus far it had been passed by in the march of improvement around Mapleton. The mossy ledges were gay with columbines in spring, not to speak of a host

of more delicate blossoms. Violets nestled in the shady places, as violets will even when they put themselves out of the way to do it, and later in the summer the blue-fringed gentians held a long festival by themselves among the rocks, Their cheery smiles might have claimed the sole attention of their young admirer had she not ventured one day with Charlie far below their seat to the river-bank, and there found a colony of scarlet lobelias in full feather holding court around a shady spring. Many a walk had ended down there since that day.

Charlie, under his mother's direction, had carried away some of the proud beauties, and had set them down in her garden with so little disturbance to their roots that they never knew that they had been moved—at least, they showed no sign of displeasure at the change, as wild flowers are apt to do. But they never looked just so beautiful as they did among the ferns by Cardinal Spring.

"Haven't we time to go down to the river?" asked Mary as they reached Look-out Point and stood gazing down through

the cedars at the lowlands. "It is so long since we were there."

"We can stay only a little while if we do," replied Mrs. Clemson, turning aside from the carriage-road with the words. "We must give some time to Ben, and I would like to stop in to see the Evanses before we come back."

"I meant to speak to you about going there," said Mary; "I had a plan, you remember, when I was in the cars coming home. Part of it was about Willie Evans. Couldn't I teach him to read? His father will never spare him to go away where he might learn, and he seems to think that Willie will never be anything but a little blind boy to be taken care of and spoiled."

"Yes; I think your plan is a good one," said Mrs. Clemson. "He has so much idle time that could be spent in reading if he only knew how, poor child! Those long winter evenings his mother spends knitting in the dark to save candles would be so much more to them all if Willie's fingers could give them the Bible stories he so delights to hear."

Mary's eyes sparkled with pleasure over this new view of the subject.

"I wonder I never thought of it before," she exclaimed. "It seems to me that then he would be better off than people who can see. He could read in the night if he wanted to, for he would read with his fingers."

"Yes, and he has another advantage which helps to prove that old saying true: 'There is no cloud but has its silver lining;' but I think you would not care to change eyes with him, for all that."

"I do not suppose I would if I tried it a while, for I like to read so many books that would not be printed in raised letters. But Willie will be so happy, I think, to read one book, after doing without so long."

"He will probably try your patience," said her mother. "You must not count too much on success."

"I think I have learned that lesson pretty well," said Mary. "I shall never again get so discouraged as I did over Mr. Denton. I do so wish we could hear about him."

"Do not be too sure, my daughter. What

strength you have is all given you, and that warm, impulsive heart of yours will yet need a great deal of training."

"I know that," she answered; "I want to do only what I can."

It was a winding path they followed to the river-side, not very distinctly marked, and sometimes branching off through the cedar clumps and underbrush till one might very easily become confused and miss his way.

"I think we are in the wrong path, mother," said Mary. "Seems to me that old chestnut was on the right, and that somewhere about here there is a dangerous shelf in the rock."

She had scarcely uttered the words when Mrs. Clemson, who had gone on a little before, gave a start and a sudden cry. Her foot had slipped on a loose stone. In trying to recover herself, she caught hold of an overhanging bush, which broke in her hand, and she slipped over the ledge of rock. It was all the work of an instant.

Mary caught her mother's dress as she slipped, and would have gone over too if

her own clothing had not become entangled. She struggled to get it free, and in so doing the terrified child had a moment to think and avoid the leap it was her first impulse to take. Her mother lay just below her, only a few feet out of her reach, but so still that Mary knew she must be either stunned or dead.

"Mother! mother!" she screamed. "Speak to me!" letting herself down with trembling hands by the nearest way she could over the rocks.

Her worst fears were not realized, however, for on reaching the spot she found that her mother had recovered enough to open her eyes and speak, though she appeared to be helpless in every other respect.

"Dear child," she said, seeing the pale, affrighted face that bent over her, "do not give up. I was stunned at first; I may not be much hurt. You must go to the village for help, though, for I shall never be able to walk home."

"Oh, if Charlie were here, or even Fido! But to leave you alone!"

Mrs. Clemson, with Mary's help, tried to

get up, but in vain. There was nothing for Mary to do but to carry out her mother's instructions; so, with a heavy heart, but with nimble footsteps, she hurried up to the road and made her way to the home of Stephen Grier, which was the nearest of three or four small white houses perched among the rocks just beyond Lookout Point.

As Mary came in sight she saw Raven harnessed and waiting at the door—a happy circumstance for her, since he was the only horse the little settlement could afford.

"Ben must be up again," she thought.

But no; coming nearer, she saw it was Stephen Grier who was using Ben's ancient establishment for Dr. Anson, who had been sent to visit the sick man and was just passing out of the house to return. Mary's story was told in breathless haste; and, without stopping to satisfy many eager and deeply sympathizing questioners with explanations that could be given at another time, she was soon back again with her pastor at the scene of the accident, leaving others to follow as quickly as possible.

After that ride home from Lookout Point

behind old Raven, Mrs. Clemson was not again outside of her door for many months. For weeks she was as helpless as an infant, scarcely able at times to think for herself, much less for her poor children, and needing stronger and more experienced nurses than they could be, though they started with the idea that no one but themselves should do anything for mother. It was a hard struggle for Mary to give up her will in this matter and allow strangers to take her place in the dear invalid's room, while she went about the house attending to duties which were necessary to be done, but which she did not understand much better than nursing, and had much less heart for. For two or three days she let the housekeeping go pretty much as it would and hovered around her mother, but the machinery her dear hands had kept in such constant order ran down at last, like a neglected clock, and Mary had to rouse up and see what she could do toward again setting it in motion.

One stormy Saturday afternoon Dr. Anson came in and found her, as he had found her more than once before, with her head on

her mother's pillow, looking the very picture of desolation. Mrs. Clemson was in a heavy sleep, the nurse drowsily nodding in her chair. He looked in, as he had been bidden to do when he rang for entrance, and without waking either of the sleepers beckoned to Mary to come out into the hall. She did so, softly shutting the door behind her.

"My child," said he, in his usual fatherly way, "I was looking over here from my study-windows—you know I can see the house now that the leaves have fallen—and I thought, since you will not be likely to get out to church to-morrow, I would step over beforehand and give you a little sermon all to yourself. You will find the text in the front bedchamber there," pointing in that direction. "Run along in; and if you need my help, I'll follow."

Such a scene as met her eyes as she opened the door!

"Oh dear! what will mother say?" she groaned.

The windows had been left open since the night before, and the new carpet was drenched with rain; while the chairs, which

had been freshly covered, and the bright crimson curtains her mother had just finished and put up were streaked and dripping wet. Worse than all that, she saw that the water had found its way through the flooring, and that the parlor wall had suffered in consequence.

Dr. Anson had followed her, as he proposed, but not to preach. Poor Mary was too heartbroken for anything but soothing words, and he went about assisting her to repair, as far as possible, the damage which had been done.

"Come, Mary!" he said, cheerily; "we have plenty of work here. Duty is plainly marked out. We shall have to call on Catherine for help, however."

But Catherine had her hands full in the kitchen. Life's first duty, in her eyes, was to wash on Mondays and scrub on Saturdays; so, when Mary came down to state the case, she was in the very midst of her labors.

"Hows'ever," she said, wiping her hands on her apron, "since it's Dr. Anson that wants me, I'll go; but mind you, Miss Mary, it won't be for long, for here are all these

things to set to rights before six to-night," waving her hand majestically over the island of tinware and crockery from the kitchen closets which had been stranded in the middle of the floor. "And nobody knows how much more I'll have to do, with that snuffy old woman up stairs a-pilin' her dishes onto my clean table without so much as renching out one. Bad luck to her! The best china too!"

Mary looked at the kitchen-table as she passed. The dinner-dishes stood unwashed in dire confusion, and under the table stood the clothes-basket with some of the week's unfinished ironing; while a peculiar smell from the range told that the great tea-kettle had boiled dry, and so would not only fail when hot water was wanted in the sick-room, but was also in danger of losing its bottom altogether. She felt that never before had she known what trouble was. Life's cares fell on her like an avalanche. And she had no mother to go to.

Catherine gave them twenty minutes of vigorous work, relieving her overcharged mind all the time by a clear and explicit

statement to Dr. Anson of the miseries of a maid-of-all-work "with sickness in the house and nobody but crazy-headed children to do a hand's turn, lettin' alone havin' strangers poking their noses into everything; and snuffy at that!"

All that could then be done was soon done. As they came down stairs Dr. Anson said,

"I think you have had a rousing sermon, Mary. There seems to be no need of an application."

"I don't know, I am sure," said Mary, with tears starting afresh; "I can't think what to do. If I could only ask mother!"

"Poor child!" said the doctor, with a kindly pressure of his hand on the little bowed head before him; "it is one of the rough places, isn't it? But the Shepherd knows. It is on the way to some of his green pastures. Follow on though he sometimes brings you out into a stony field of duty. It is a *right* way, you may be sure, if it does go through the wilderness and the solitary place. So cheer up, my dear; it is only one step at a time, and the good Lord is with you all the way. Do not fret be-

cause you are not strong enough to lift mother and do what you would like to do for her. It is not for us to refuse the duties God sets before us, and I think you will find that he has called you to show forth his patience in the kitchen these days. So take up the cross, my child, and look to him for strength to bear it. Good-bye!"

The doctor brought his pastoral visit, with all its varied duties, to a hasty close, for Catherine's voice was sounding in the distance like the far-off mutterings of a storm, and he had scarcely closed the door before Charlie rushed into the hall with a flushed and angry face to tell the story of his wrongs in the kitchen.

"I have been a good boy all day," he said, "have fed the chickens, brought up the coal, done all the errands, and never slammed a door one single time; and it's Saturday too! And now, because Jamie Grant followed me in with muddy boots when he brought up Catherine's kindling-wood, she drove Jamie out and bolted the door after him. It's a shame! I won't stand it, and I told her so."

Charlie would have expressed his views on the matter still more fully and loudly if Mary had not hushed him by reminding him that his mother might hear the noise he was making.

"Come into the parlor," she said, "and see what has happened."

The boy's attention was entirely diverted by this new mischance, and, looking into his sister's face, he saw how wretchedly she felt.

"*I* left those windows open, Mary." Charlie was always frank. "Who would have thought of all this flood?"

"You should have—"

Mary's reproof died on her lips as she remembered how entirely she had been turning away from every duty but the one she coveted in her mother's room. Then Charlie looked so sorry! "He is such a dear boy—so much better than I am," she thought, "though he never professed to be a Christian." So she only said,

"We shall have to do better than this, Charlie, or mother will think we did not try to take care."

"That's so, Mary; but I have tried—Catherine said so herself; and, after all, see what a row she made about nothing."

"It was something, and something I might have hindered. Catherine has ever so much to do, and she has been used to having a great deal of mother's help and contrivance. I must go now and see what I can do for her;" and, forgetting her own trouble in her desire to aid another, Mary left Charlie and went into the kitchen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

"Life's common round, its daily task,
Will furnish all that we may ask:
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

MARY had no time that winter to teach Willie Evans or to read to Ben Maclean, pleasant and profitable as such tasks would have been. Yet the prayer that she had so often put up to God for strength and opportunity to serve him was day by day answered more fully than she could understand until years afterward, when she came to look back upon this early lesson. It was a very humble task which was set before her, but in it she learned more of the spirit of Him who "pleased not himself" than she could have learned in any other way. She began to see the truth as she stood over the kitchen-table washing dishes after Dr. Anson left. His

word of counsel at parting was followed up by another to the same purpose, but from quite a different source; so she had "line upon line," as we shall see.

Catherine's wrath was yet blazing over the muddy tracks on her clean floor, and she was disposed to vent her ill-humor on any one who came within sound of her voice. Pots and pans were going into closets with an amazing din, but through all the hubbub she contrived to give Mary her views on the subject at considerable length and with a voice that could have taken in a much larger audience. It would have been much pleasanter to have one of her mother's sweet lessons, but still the truth Mary needed to hear came in the time, place and manner to make it sink deeply into her heart and there take root.

"It's all very well to mope and cry over sick folks," said Catherine, with a vigorous push which sent the wash-boiler rattling to its place, "but, to my thinkin', them as puts their love into clean clothes and clean dishes to make 'em comfortable is the kind that proves it best. Whatever will your mother

say, poor dear! when she gits up—as the Lord grant she may!—and finds the best bedroom, that she had just set to rights with her own hands, lookin' worse'n if I'd been there of a Monday with my wash-tubs? which same I'd never do, as you very well know, unless I was crazed, which it is good for ye I'm not, thank fortin!"

"I am thankful too, Catherine," said Mary, meekly, in a quiet interval when her voice could be heard. "I am going to help you now and see if I can't do better."

Catherine, mollified by this and a sight she caught now and then of the poor little tired face over the dishes, softened her tone considerably; but she went on to have out her say, as she was apt to do everywhere and under all circumstances:

"It's your own mother, miss, as has taught me more things'n kitchen-work since I came here, a greenhorn, last spring was a twelvemonth; and so I know—havin' her to tell me, you see—what the blessed Lord himself thinks about them as minds their duty without pickin' and choosin' for theirselves so much. It was only yesterday week she

sat there by that table a-peelin' peaches for tea and tellin' of some holy man in old times who saw Jesus in a dream, as it were, all in his beautiful robes and a crown on his head. While he was lookin' all as happy as could be, he was called away to do some poor work—like this, mayhap, you and me are at now. He went to his duty; and when he came back, there stood the Lord yet, waitin' for him with a smile, and says he, 'If you had not gone, I would not have stayed,' meanin' that we pleased him as much by such work anybody can do, and *ought* to do, as by anything oncommon."

Here the voice died away down the cellar-stairs, whither Catherine had betaken herself in the performance of some of her numerous duties. But her timely words made that dish-washing a new era in Mary's life. The truth was not new, but it had begun to spring up in the soil God had prepared for it. She found enough to do, when that duty was over, to keep her busy until after her usual hour for retiring. How different all the homely work seemed to her when she thought of it as something done for her

mother's sake! It was a new life for her, and almost a new love—a love that certainly felt and acted very differently from the old dreamy affection she once had. She had scarcely lifted her head from the pillow the next morning before it reminded her that if her dear mother had been well she would have been up an hour earlier, busy here and there in so many ways that would add to the family comfort. The sitting-room would have been dusted, books and papers put in order, the breakfast-table set, and, more than likely, some freshly-gathered flowers among its dainty china would have told of an early visit to the garden. To do all this, and to do it in mother's stead, was Mary's new ambition. She set herself to every task with an energy that only love can give, and in so doing, with scarcely a thought of praise, she pleased that dearest Friend of all who often claims our best service in the same humble path of duty.

Weeks after this beginning, when Mrs. Clemson was able to come feebly down the stairs to sit again with her little family around the winter fire—for December snow

was whitening the earth before she could leave her room—she found much that showed the work of unskillful hands, but everywhere proofs that true love had done its best. Even Charlie, whose zeal had been of a fitful kind and needed many promptings, had come into harness, and "never had to be told the second time, ma'am," said Catherine, "about fetchin' the kindlin'-wood, but brought it to me reg'lar."

Mrs. Clemson was sitting alone one pleasant December afternoon, examining Mary's awkward attempt at finishing some work for Charlie which had been left in the family work-basket at the time of the accident, when her pastor and his wife came in to pay her a little visit.

"I hardly know whether to laugh or to cry over this," said Mrs. Clemson, holding up the garment for inspection; "so I have been doing both. It is some of Mary's work, dear child! She has given herself up to efforts to please and help me."

Mrs. Anson put on her spectacles to look into the matter.

"These stitches are all right," said the

good lady—"we might expect that from your training—but who ever saw a shirt-sleeve put in after such a fashion as this? The child was thinking of a tight-bodied dress, wasn't she? so she has brought the seam around to the front and left out the gusset."

"Let me see," said the doctor, bringing his white head into a closer neighborhood with the little garment in question. "Is that so very strange?"

Both ladies were laughing heartily.

"Of course it is, Dr. Anson. But one cannot expect a man to know it, unless it is by experience; and then we should be quite apt to hear about it. What would you do if your shirt-sleeves were in such a twist as that? But it is too bad to laugh over such an honest attempt as this. Dear little Mary!—Do not tell her, Mrs. Clemson, that anybody has been criticising her work."

"I am glad, for my part, that you showed it to us," said the doctor. "There is a whole sermon in it, as I often say, text and all. The work was not well done, and might better

have been left undone; but a mother's blessing follows the love the blundering child has put in it. That is the way with us all. The Lord smiles on those who have done what they could, though often he has to do all his children's work over after them to make it worth anything."

As was said before, Mary found no time to carry out her plans for the winter's leisure. As soon as possible after her mother had left her sick-room she commenced her round of school-duties again, and, being very ambitious to keep up with her class, she found herself much crowded for time. Catherine was ready to take her full share of the family burdens, and was now as anxious to relieve Mary as before she had been to find fault with her; but for months after her fall Mrs. Clemson was so crippled that she had still to give up every old duty but the issuing of orders as she sat in her easy-chair by the fire. So, when Mary came home at night, there was a piece of sewing to take up or a room to be put in order, instead of the book or the visit she once had for amusement. Lessons came to fill up the time after sup-

per, and, as for Saturday, it was the busiest day of all.

She was talking over her plans one day with her mother, just after the surgeon had told them that months must pass before Mrs. Clemson could use her hand for sewing, if ever she used it at all.

"I have been thinking, mother, of what you told me the other day—that nothing *happens* to God's people. He brings good out of everything for them."

"Yes, my child; he had a purpose to accomplish in allowing me to stumble as I did. I have been studying it over a great deal, and now I see many blessings flowing from it to us all. And there are more to come. You, for instance, are getting a beautiful training in the school of Christ. He 'pleased not himself.' What joy will flow into your soul as more and more you go on giving up your will to his!"

"But I have not given up my plans, mother," said Mary, going on with the dusting she had in hand. "It seems to me I am only waiting for a chance to carry them all out."

"What if it never comes?"

"I hope I shall always be willing to let Jesus have his own way about that—he knows best about everything; but I shall be so thankful if he lets me use my eyes and hands and feet and keeps me strong and well, so that I can do good for a long lifetime, like Grandma Porter."

"So shall I, my dear; but I have this trust in God—that if he takes away any blessing from his dear ones, it is only that he may give them more and better in another way."

"I have been thinking," said Mary, "how pleasant it would be if you could read to me afternoons while I am sewing."

"With all my heart, dear child! My eyes are as good as ever they were, and I should have offered to do so before had I not remembered that you are not fond of hearing others read."

"I am not so selfish now about that," replied Mary; "and I think I shall enjoy my books all the more when I can share the pleasure with you—that is, if it is a pleasure."

"You little know," exclaimed Mrs. Clemson, "how deeply I am interested in all that takes the attention of my children or goes to form their minds or their hearts."

So that was settled, and with it another pleasure which Mary had expected to have all to herself, but which, in the self-forgetfulness she was now learning, she cheerfully gave up to her dear mother.

Ben Maclean, old and feeble as he was, had sufficiently recovered to totter to Mrs. Clemson's house on pleasant mornings to gain that refreshment for soul and body which his poor home had never afforded him. He had been down on one of these visits the day before, and Catherine had taken him vigorously in hand, as she did all family matters nowadays.

"He's got to comin' reg'lar, ma'am," she said to Mrs. Clemson as she aided him into the sitting-room; "and now, sech bein' the case, I says to him, says I, 'Ben, the coffee-pot is emptied long ago, and the bread set away 'cordin to orders,' for I neglects nothing or nobody 'cepting when I am called two or three ways to onct, and that I can't help. as

you very well know, havin' but one pair of hands or feet and nobody at the fore but myself.—But, as I was sayin', 'Ben,' says I, 'come in, for I've saved the coffee'—meanin' to please you, ma'am—'and I'll get the bread and welcome, so as you don't crumb it around, and then the missus will have a good word for you in the sitting-room.' So here he is," handing Ben a chair with special reference to the place his old boots would find on the oil-cloth.

It was an opportunity not to be lost, and the accounts Mrs. Clemson could give of such visits led Mary to suggest that her mother should take up for him the work in which she had promised herself so much pleasure.

"I only wish I could be at home to hear him talk," said Mary: "he makes such queer speeches sometimes; but you had best read to him whenever he can come. And would you not be able to teach poor Willie Evans too?"

"Are you willing to hand over *all* your enterprises to me?" asked her mother, remembering how eagerly her daughter had

hoped by such efforts to win a little glory for herself as well as for her Saviour.

"I think I am. We'll change work: I will do yours and you will do mine. Only," —and she laughed as she said it—"we are so mixed up about these things! I can't do anything for you without helping myself too."

"We cannot live or die to ourselves in this world: we must either help or hinder one another," said Mrs. Clemson.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRUIT AFTER MANY DAYS.

"Content to fill a little space,
So Thou be glorified."

ANOTHER Christian, older than Mary in years, but quite as young in experience, was blessed with her that winter in a discipline which drives the soul from earthly props to Christ the Stronghold.

Poor Ben Maclean would have been glad to have leaned in his time of trial on Mrs. Clemson's clear understanding and tender sympathy. She could always disentangle his mazy thoughts, for he lived in a sort of mental cobweb; and when his weak brain, spurred on by fever, was doing so much more thinking than usual, he longed for her presence, and could not at first be satisfied that God had put so great a hindrance in the way of her coming. But he had set aside this human helper that the

poor bewildered, tempest-tossed pilgrim might look more to him for comfort and guidance.

"Oh, eyes that are weary
And hearts that are sore,
Look off unto Jesus,
And sorrow no more.
The light of his countenance
Shineth so bright
That here, as in heaven,
There need be no night."

It was with a new song in his mouth that Ben arose from that bed of suffering. He had learned to take Jesus at his word, and the joy of sin forgiven was flowing like a peaceful river through his heart, leading him on to that sweet obedience to God's will which can be given only by a childlike love and faith.

"'Twas like as though I'd never knowed the Lord afore," said Ben as he took a seat by Mrs. Clemson's pleasant fireside one morning. "But what fetched me was I hain't been givin' him credit for—" Here the poor old man broke down at the mention

"Of that love beyond a brother's."

"Yes, Ben, you are richer than you know, for what a treasure you have found in Jesus,

and how long he has waited for you to put out your hand and take it!"

"Yes'm. If it weren't for his patience! I says to Clarie this mornin', 'Clarie,' says I, 'his love is so oncommon. It's well he's fetched his own light along to show it off or—'"

"We couldn't see it," added Mrs. Clemson, who knew just how to finish up Ben's sentences for him. "God sent his Spirit to take the things of Christ and show them to us."

"Yes'm. Heavenly Father's a great provider; nothin's wantin' in his plans, so as *we come into 'em.*"

A smile overspread the rugged features of the old man as he spoke. Truth beyond the power of the feeble, stammering tongue to express was shining in upon his soul and opening out before it the glories of a finished redemption.

"How did you come into your heavenly Father's plans, Ben?" asked Mrs. Clemson, willing to hear in his own simple language the story Dr. Anson had already told her.

"I was so tired!" said Ben, with a sigh

over the very memory of those weary times of mental suffering. "I was thinkin' and thinkin' to make all straight 'twixt me and him," pointing upward, "and 'twas all explained to me time and time agin by them as know'd, but next mornin' there was nothin' to show for it, and I was beat out tryin'. One day says I to Clarie, 'If I could only hold on!' She says, 'Ben, if you was to drop, you couldn't fall out o' the Lord's hand.' Says I, 'No more I couldn't.' I kind o' fell asleep with that. 'Twas restin' to me; 'twas like bein' put in the cradle agin, with mother to watch."

"You will not again try take care of yourself, will you, Ben?"

"I don't count on nothin' but his lovin' and *holdin' on*, 'cause what am I?"

So this poor halting one crept into the shadow of his Lord, and two years later—for we must leave Ben here—when he passed down into the dark valley, it could be said of him, in highest praise for earth or heaven, he "kept the faith."

The winter passed pleasantly away, and

spring came with its soft breezes and the happy songs of birds. The maple-leaves were budding out, and the crocus-blossoms laughed in the sunshine along the garden paths. The children began to long for their rambles in the woods, and to talk of days when mother would be well and strong and could spend a long bright day with them in the open air.

Spring brought its duties too, though they had never lain very heavily on any one at Mrs. Clemson's home, so long as its willing mistress could herself attend to them.

"Who is to look after the garden now?" asked Charlie, one warm April morning. "Mary is as busy as ever she can be; and she does not know much about gardening, even if she had plenty of time."

"I think we can manage it, my little caretaker," replied Mrs. Clemson, "without putting too much on your young shoulders. I shall get help to break up the ground and put it in order, and I shall look to you to keep the weeds under."

Mary came in just then, tired and hot after her long walk from school.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, flinging her books on the table; "I'd like to rest for a week if I could!"

"Poor child! I wish you might have a holiday. This spring weather makes us all long for a change."

Mary looked at the dear face leaning back in the easy-chair. She had not noticed before how worn her mother looked or how fast the smooth brown hair was becoming silvered.

"Why, mother," she said, quickly, "I am strong enough; I was only wishing for something fresh and cheery. I have been as tired as this many a time after a walk to Cardinal Spring."

"Perhaps this will do you good." Charlie was turning out his pockets in a laborious effort to find something. Twine, slate-pencils, knives, nails and all the rest of the rubbish had to come out before he found what he was after. "It's a letter for you, Mary. The queerest-looking thing, too! Oh, here it is!" handing over a brown envelope which had the address written across the top:

to Mis' Mary clemson,

mapletown.

Within, it read:

TORQUAY, ENGLAND, March 29.

MI DEAR YUNG FREND: i hav not forgot mi prommis to rite you about Mr denton Hee dyed yesterda nune in this plaice the Lord wus verry merciful to Him an answered Our prayers att last, fur He dyed hopin in Jesus and confessin thee same fur which let Us Praze our Faithfull God Hee made this last request yesterda mornin in these wurds giv a token fur mee to mary Clemson When axed wot Hee sayed A bible witch will be don by His afflycted muther. Pra fur hur

i giv mi dooty to your muther never forgetin you to so no more at Present and hopin you Can egscuse mistakes of your true frend

THOMAS BRYAN.

"Oh, mother, this is wonderful!" said Mary. "I had given it all up."

She could say no more, but ran out of the room to that corner of her little bedchamber whither she had carried many a sorrow and many a happiness, but never a joy so deep, so solemn, so far-reaching, as this.

It is a good place to leave the young Christian for a while, so lovingly reproved for her

want of faith as well as cheered and encouraged to make a new beginning in the service of Christ,

> "Dropping her burden at his feet
> To bear a song away."

Weeks after Bryan's letter came, a packet arrived for Mary. It was a beautiful little Bible bound in velvet and gold, marked on the fly-leaf with this text—the last words of her friend Harry Denton:

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

June roses were in bloom, and Mrs. Clemson had so revived in the fresh air and sunshine that from a full heart she was thanking God for a prospect of entire recovery.

Catherine, who, with all her numerous duties as housekeeper and nurse, found time to contrive many pleasant changes of scene as well as of diet for her beloved mistress, had one day dragged her easy-chair out under the orchard trees and set it where she could see a long stretch in the Mapleton road, up which the children would come from school.

"'Twill hearten you up a bit, mum," said she, tucking the wrappings about the invalid with her strong hands as though she had a baby in charge; "and if you can't put your feet to the turf, you can feel the smell of it coming up as sweet as roses, and the good Lord himself smiling out of the sunshine all around."

Some odor from the kitchen seemed then to reach Catherine, for she rushed off in its direction, for a few moments leaving Mrs. Clemson to her own happy thoughts. It was not long before the maid's honest face appeared at the window, and she called out cheerily:

"Never fear, mum! I thought the bread might be burnin', but it's done to a turn; and the cakes come out splendid. Here are the children comin' from school up the road, and you lookin' like such a blessed picture under them trees."

Catherine's warm heart was as full of sunshine as was the garden of flowers. In a moment she had routed Fido from the door-mat, where he lay napping, and sent him flying up the road to meet Charlie.

"In case of letters, mum," she said, with an explanatory nod to Mrs. Clemson. "That dog is set up for a week if he can bring home the mail."

Fido was soon back with a great mouthful of letters; he laid them down at Mrs. Clemson's feet as though he had a rabbit to wriggle about and bark over in the fullness of his doggish pride. Catherine, whose eye was upon everything that went on, made a sally out of the kitchen at this, and carried him off under her arm, so that the letters might be opened in peace.

There were more of them than Mrs. Clemson usually received at once. Two or three could wait a while; so she laid them aside and took up one with a foreign postmark.

"This is from dear Aunt Julia," she said to the children.

"This is marked like it," said Mary, handing her mother an envelope in still heavier mourning than the first.

"Yes, this too is from England, but it is directed in a strange hand. Ah! it is from Torquay. Poor Mrs. Denton! I hardly know which to read first; so I'll open both."

"Do, mother, please! There may be something in Aunt Julia's for us."

Shall we read a few lines in Mrs. Denton's letter as it lies open before us in the sunshine? We need but a few words to tell its story, and Mrs. Clemson's eyes may be too dim with tears to read much farther than we do:

God was very merciful to me, dear friend, when he brought us together in my deep sorrow. The Saviour of whom you then loved to tell me has opened my blinded eyes to see my sin and that fountain of his blood where I may wash and be cleansed. I see, too, that my treasures were taken that I might be led to seek the heavenly portion I so much needed.

But there was another letter, which the children carried off to read together; and if we listen, we shall hear again of little Kittie Brainard. She has news to tell, and some words that will linger in Mary's heart long after many another record of her childhood is forgotten:

WINSTON PARK, June 3.

DEAR MARY: I keep wishing all the time you were here. England is a good country; only it is so far off. George has a pair of white goats, and drives me about

in a little wagon. It is nice, when they don't upset us, for they did yesterday when they backed around.

Oh, Mary, you will be so glad! Grandma Fortesque has a gentleman visiting here who knows all about Mr. Denton. He went to heaven, after all, and said to everybody how he loved Jesus and wanted them to love him too. So, when he saw that little brown boy among the shining ones, I believe he didn't think how he used to look, but was glad to have him in "happy land" with all the rest. Mr. Denton said there was a little girl over in America who kept praying for him and he could not forget it. I wonder who it was?

My letter grows so full before I get done! Why don't you write long letters too, and tell me about Emily Grant and Dr. Anson and Fido and how everybody is? Does Willie Evans read yet? I am learning to sew, but I like ripping best—except when the stitches have to be put back again. Do you talk French yet? I do, ever since last April, and grandma explains it to me. So no more at present, with bushels of love to all my friends.

Your dear cousin,

KITTIE.

P. S. I forgot Charlie, but I will write to him next time.

And here we leave Mary. Life is but beginning with her. Its steps homeward are hidden from our view, as from hers,

"For God by ways they have not known
Will lead his own."

But of this we are assured: He who begun the good work in her heart is able to carry it on; and, watered by his heavenly dews and nurtured in his sunshine, that which was at first but a "blade" shall at last become "the full corn in the ear" and add to his abundant harvest.

Nor will Charlie be unblessed, for whom a mother's prayers constantly ascend before the throne of God in the name of Him who said, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

THE END.

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